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SPECIAL ISSUE

MYTHS ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST

In this special issue on myths about the Arab-Israeli conflict, **Boas Evron**, an Israeli writer for *Yediot Aharonot*, discusses how quite different conceptions of Zionism have obscured the fundamental question of Israeli identity. . . . **Edward Said**, a member of the Palestine National Council, goes beyond official rhetoric to commence a discourse with his fellow Palestinians aimed at clarifying what self-determination really means. . . . Contributing editor **Christopher Hitchens** describes how parochial conceptions of Israeli interest have swung a large body of American liberal opinion to the right—particularly on foreign policy issues. . . . **Edward Mortimer**, a scholar-journalist and editorial writer for *The Times* of London, draws upon history to distinguish between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in the Islamic world. . . . **Sadik Al-Azm**, a noted Arab philosopher, stands conventional wisdom on its head in an essay on how Palestinian Arabs have adopted a national identity that is a mirror image of their Israeli antagonists'. . . . And finally, **Michael Reisman**, a professor of international law at Yale Law School, evaluates two contrasting perspectives on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

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LETTERS.

SHARON AND THE SINAI

Washington, D.C.

It is easy to quibble over interpretation and opinion, which is what Lesley Hazleton's article, "The Moderating of Arik Sharon" [*The Nation*, Nov. 14], essentially is, no matter how wrong-headed and naïve the interpretations or opinions may be. However, in addition to her rather odd view of what was essentially a realistic, all-round portrait of Sharon, Hazleton makes some serious errors in fact, which cloud and put in question the remainder of her pronouncements and judgments.

Hazleton suggests that Sharon was a strong opponent of Camp David and the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, and that "Begin signed the treaty over the forceful opposition of his current defense minister, Arik Sharon." She goes on to say that "Sharon almost managed to sabotage [the accords]."

I myself saw Sharon forcefully raise his hand to vote for the treaty in the Israeli Cabinet, surely the place where he would have forcefully stated his opposition. More important, however, is the fact that Sharon had a positive effect on the Camp David negotiations, helping to break what appeared to be a deadly impasse over the Sinai. Ezer Weizmann, in his recent memoirs, *The Battle for Peace*, remembers Begin not budging on the issue of giving up the Sinai settlements and how Sadat was equally adamant about the issue. It was suggested that a call be put in to Sharon to help budge Begin, even though Sharon was the administrator of Israel's settlement policy. After the call was made, there was a surprising result. "A few hours later," Weizmann writes, "a deeply moved Begin was telling the Israeli delegation that Arik Sharon had phoned him; to his surprise, Sharon was in favor of evacuating the settlements [in the Sinai] if they were the last remaining obstacle to a peace agreement." Weizmann, a keen observer at Camp David, goes on to say that "Sharon's intervention was bound to have some influence on Begin's eventual decision," which it did.

This is a far cry from the man who supposedly wanted to sabotage Camp David. It is more accurate to say that Sharon had a significant role in saving the treaty.

Amos Perlmutter

HAZLETON REPLIES

New York City

Professor Perlmutter's "all-round portrait" in *The New York Times Magazine* was decidedly semicircular. The other half of the circle is hardly suited to a future prime minister. Thus Sharon's supporters such as Perlmutter abstemiously refrain from any mention of Gush Emunim, although Sharon has been a forceful supporter ("forceful" being the Sharon adjective par excellence) of the movement since its inception and its representative in the Cabinet since 1977.

I would certainly not quibble with the decription of Sharon as a pragmatist of power. But Sharon's sudden about-face in response to a telephone call from a close friend on the Camp David negotiating team does not add up to "a significant role in saving the treaty." Rather, Menachem Begin could not sign the accords without the assurance that he would not face an all-out attack from Sharon on his return to Israel. The fact that both before and after Camp David, Sharon was urging extended Jewish settlement, first in the Sinai itself and then in the Gaza Strip, did not prevent him from acceeding to the pragmatic demands of the time.

To quote Ezer Weizmann in justification of Sharon is insulting to Weizmann's whole assessment of the man, let alone to the courageous stand Weizmann took all through the peace negotiations. Others can quote too. In the same book, Weizmann describes Sharon's strategy as one of "trickery and ruses, indirect approaches and direct lunges." In war, Weizmann says, "I'd follow [Sharon] through fire and flood. . . . But political life has different rules. Sharon has lost sight of the distinction between his own personal good and the good of the state."

Sharon's style of pragmatism—the expedience of power—has paid off. Now he is defense minister and being mooted by such as Perlmutter for prime minister. Meanwhile the system of trickery and ruses continues. One example: the new Sharon-appointed civilian administrator of the West Bank, Prof. Menachem Millson, is the same Lieut. Col. Menachem Millson who was the Arab-affairs adviser to the military government of the West Bank until three years ago. The policy and the man remain the same; only the clothing has changed. The same might be said of Sharon.

Lesley Hazleton

EDITORIAL.

Our own perspective on the Arab-Israeli conflict is not simply the sum of the views expressed by the contributors to this issue—indeed, we have differences, major and minor, with each of our essayists. But we also believe that they have managed to pierce the rhetorical haze that envelops this topic.

George Orwell once pointed out that political chaos may be both a cause and an effect of the decay of language, adding, "A man may take a drink because he feels himself a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks." Nowhere is this semantic vicious cycle more apparent than in the American vocabulary of Middle East politics. Commentators and editorial writers, on both the left and the right, inveterately refer to supporters of Menachem Begin's government as "pro-Israel" and to those who favor dealing with the Palestine Liberation Organization as "anti-Israel." Of course Israelis rarely make this mistake, because many of them who are anti-Begin are "pro-Israel" by any reasonable definition, and a sizable minority of patriotic Israeli dissenters favors—under various conditions—negotiating with the P.L.O.

Unhappily, Israel's security is indeed precarious. But, in the long run, an even greater threat than P.L.O. terrorists may be a danger from within. Israel's democratic character—and its legitimacy and distinctiveness as a Middle Eastern state—is placed in increasing jeopardy with the passage of each day of military subjugation for 1.2 million Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza. The more "successful" Israel is in introducing a large settler population into the occupied territories, the closer it is to becoming a total garrison state. If such a dark outcome is in prospect, there can be no sentiment more pro-Israel than that expressed by the Israeli writer and editor Yael Lotan: "In my opinion *nothing* is worse than the continued occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip . . . the Zionist dream is fast turning into a nightmare. We must therefore resolve to get out—not negotiate or haggle but simply *get out of there*"

Among the misconceptions obscuring the road out of the present impasse are those having to do with the nature of contemporary Zionism. In the United States, this confusion is largely the result of the popular media's ignorance of or refusal to acknowledge the differences of opinion in Israel

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and among American Jews on the meaning of Zionism.

It is necessary to remember that this debate has deep historical roots. Did Zionism mean a homeland for all Jews? Was this homeland for Jews and no other people? Was it intended for those Jews who wanted to go there and whomever else cared to join them? These questions were all debated in the 1920s and 1930s, and since a majority of Jews were opposed to what Evron calls "messianic" Zionism, which expected all Jews to emigrate to Israel, it was impossible to equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism.

As Evron suggests, after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, it gradually became clear that messianic Zionism—with its assertion that all Jews are one nation, that the ingathering of the Diaspora is the raison d'être of Israel—was an outmoded or unrealizable idea. And so the Israeli intellectual Uri Avnery could write in 1975 that Zionism was dead. "Zionism meant the ingathering of exiles," he said, "but people are just not coming here."

Some would prefer to put it more positively: political Zionism succeeded in creating a state called Israel, a Hebrew nation in a part of historical Palestine. One can use the word *Hebrew* as a convenient way to describe a people with a common language, culture and national identity, which Zionism, as it happens, helped create in Palestine. This definition of Israeli identity is therefore perhaps helpful to an understanding of the present situation, for if there has developed out of Zionism a Hebrew people indigenous to Palestine, then the right of those people to self-determination cannot be challenged, even by the Palestinian Arabs who were dispossessed by the 1948 war. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict can then be understood in a quite different light. In a "post-Zionist era," it is not a conflict between Arab and Jew, but between Arab Palestinian and Hebrew Palestinian. Such cumbersome language can be further refined: it is a conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Just as there is a distinctly Israeli identity (Hebrew as opposed to merely Jewish), there is also a Palestinian (Arab) identity.

The most articulate proponent of this viewpoint is Hillel Kook, whom we first met in Tel Aviv several years ago. Kook is an Israeli patriot who has made a unique passage

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through twentieth-century Zionism. Born into a family of revered rabbis, Kook was for many years a follower of Begin's mentor, Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky, and he and Begin were colleagues in the Irgun military organization. Kook's Zionism, however, differed in one major way from that of the founders of Israel. Like them, he sought the establishment of a new political state. But Begin, Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion and others ended up creating a progressively more theocratic state, while Kook sought a *Hebrew* secular state whose creation would mark the end of political Zionism (and would, therefore, perhaps appear less alien to its Arab neighbors). Ben Gurion et al. prevailed, of course, but only in a formal sense, for today most Israelis are neither religious nor messianic Zionists. They are Israeli *sabras*, Hebrews whose definition of Zionism is synonymous with Israeli patriotism.

At our meeting, Kook pulled out his Israeli identity card and exclaimed, "Look, Israel is the only state in the world that legally defines 'Arab' as a nationality. Here on my identity card I must claim to be either 'Arab' or 'Jewish.' In fact, I fought for the establishment of Israel precisely to become an Israeli Palestinian. Yes, yes, I am a Palestinian, a Hebrew in a political state called Israel located in historical Palestine."

What relevance, you may ask, does this idea of national identities for the Hebrews and the Palestinians have to the prospects for peace in the Middle East—especially since a settlement can't be externally imposed but must arise out of direct dealings between the Israelis and the Palestinians?

The answer is twofold. First, this approach may undermine the harmful consequences of traditional definitions. Messianic Zionism's claim of a Jewish right to Eretz Israel, the biblical Holy Land, impels modern Israelis to conclude, as did an early Zionist, Dr. Arthur Ruppin, in 1936, "It is our destiny to be in a state of continual warfare with the Arabs." Begin's Zionism would deny the Palestinians the right to self-determination in any portion of British-mandated Palestine. On the grounds of "national security," Begin proclaims Israel's right to erect settlements on West Bank land seized from Palestinians. This logic leads inexorably to the title of Rabbi Meir Kahane's new book, *They Must Go*, in which the American-born founder of the Jewish Defense League argues that the Palestinians must be expelled from the occupied territories and Israel.

Second, recognition that the conflict is between the Israelis and the Palestinian nationalist movement could lay the groundwork on the Israeli side for the beginnings of a politics of compromise. Although there have been Hebrew nationalists who were also territorial maximalists, in our view the logic of competing nationalist movements argues for territorial compromise, a two-state solution.

Messianic Zionism, because it claims that all Jews everywhere are one nation, requires Begin to seek a victorious peace for *all* Jews. As Golda Meier once told a group of tired soldiers on the Golan Heights in the midst of the 1973 war: "If all the blood that was shed in keeping Israel alive was only for the 3 million [Israelis] of today, it is not worthwhile."

There is, of course, in many such mystical appeals a grain of truth. And we acknowledge a qualification to our view of Israel in the post-Zionist era. Israel rose in part out of the ashes of the Nazi Holocaust. And so at least for the generation of Jewish survivors of that incomprehensible horror, Israel will be and must be more than a merely symbolic refuge. Thus, the Law of Return is grounded in historical reality, despite its residue of mysticism.

As for the Palestinians, we must start with the fact that they formally reject the politics of partition. The P.L.O.'s covenant does state that "Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement . . . [and] the liberation of Palestine will destroy the Zionist and imperialist presence." But here again the language of myth conceals reality. The leadership of the Palestinian movement perpetuates certain myths for its own short-term survival in sectarian feuds. One of the cruelest of these myths is the promise of "martyrdom" to young men and women who volunteer for suicide missions into Israel. In fact, these lives are sacrifices in a propaganda war waged solely to keep alive the myth that a military victory can be achieved against Israel. The genuine martyrs are P.L.O. leaders like Said Hammami and others who publicly accepted the politics of partition and then became victims of Palestinian fratricide.

The stubborn refusal of the P.L.O. to amend its covenant has in turn given rise to another myth—that there has been no evolution in the P.L.O.'s political program. Actually, its positions have changed a great deal. Since the 1974 meeting of the Palestine National Council, when the "Transitional Program" was adopted, the P.L.O. has been committed to accepting sovereignty over *any* portion of Palestine.

There is, in fact, a great deal of private and public debate within the Palestinian community, but it is a debate carried on at high personal risk. The Palestinian people are encouraged by their leaders to believe that they are in a state of war with Israel; thus any advocacy of "moderation" inevitably draws charges of treason.

These circumstances are exacerbated by the "umbrella" structure of the P.L.O., which shelters parties that range across the ideological spectrum. This apparent unity lends support to still another myth—that the P.L.O. is a national liberation movement like any other Third World guerrilla group. It is not. There is no unity of command or political direction. Yasir Arafat is chairman by default because of his great talent for not antagonizing the P.L.O.'s disparate member organizations. Before any political initiative can be taken, there must be near unanimity among these groups.

The P.L.O. is also constrained by another condition of its existence. It must cater to its most vociferous and militant constituency, the Palestinians in the refugee camps in Lebanon. And though few knowledgeable observers question the P.L.O.'s mandate to represent all Palestinians, the fact that the largest concentration of the Palestinians in exile live in Jordan under the absolute rule of King Hussein exercises a strong influence on the P.L.O.'s political course. Obviously, any democratic evolution within the P.L.O.—and,

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perforce, the creation of an Arab Palestinian state—must involve these "Jordanian" Palestinians, as well as the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza.

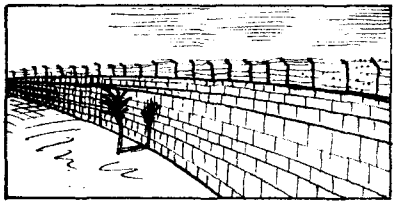
Herein lies one of the more intractable myths of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict—the "Jordanian solution." The Palestinians supposedly seek to establish a Palestinian state, the myth runs, but there is, in fact, already a state called Jordan in which more than 50 percent of the population is Palestinian. Hence, Jordan is at least part of a Palestinian homeland. Indeed, it might have become that if the Palestinians had had the political maturity and organization to seize power in Jordan prior to the June 1967 war. They finally made their move in the 1970 "Black September" civil war but were crushed by Hussein's British-trained and American-supplied Bedouin army. Yet many Palestinians still endorse the proposition that "the road to Jerusalem lies through Amman."

Whether Hussein is an obstacle or the key to Palestinian self-determination is not for us to say. The Palestinians are not particularly enamored of Hussein, but the monarch, an astute political survivor, has since 1974 been careful not to speak on their behalf. He might well some day step aside or become a constitutional monarch of a Palestinian state encompassing both banks of the Jordan River. Shlomo Avineri's view of a two-state solution is provocative:

> Whether it be called Palestine, Palestine-Jordan, the United Arab Kingdom or the Republic of Palestine will be up to its population: but the Palestinian people cannot and should not be dissected into two states—a West Bank-Gaza state on the one hand and the Kingdom of Jordan on the other [see symposium, "A Peace Israel Can Live With," *The Nation*, November 3, 1979].

When this might happen and under what conditions no one can say. Pessimism is a ready anodyne. To the people in the region, U.S. policy in the Middle East must seem insensitive, opportunistic (read oil-hungry) and plain dangerous in an age of nuclear weaponry. Furthermore, Israel's economic and strategic dependence on the United States is extremely debilitating to the client. Only if time brings a diminishing of American intervention in the region can we look forward to a peaceful accommodation between Israeli and Arab Palestinians. Until then, we can only attempt to demystify the nationalistic passions that grip this tormented and holy part of the world.

ARTICLES.



Israel After Zionism

BOAS EVRON

Before he founded Zionism, Theodore Herzl, that quintessential assimilated Jew, had a wonderful idea for the solution of the "Jewish problem": all Jews should convert simultaneously to Christianity, and the problem would fade away. Zionism was essentially the same solution. If Jews had a country of their own, like other peoples, they would cease to be "Jews," and the problem would fade away.

There is, however, a basic difference between the two solutions. The first solution was based on the assumption that only the barrier of religion kept Jews from full participation in Christian European civilization. The second solution assumed that Jews were basically a nation, and that religion was only one aspect of their identity. Unlike other nations, the Jews lacked a land of their own, making them "abnormal" and causing the unpleasant traits that anti-Semites ascribed to them (there was a surprising correspondence between some anti-Semitic stereotypes and the traits that the early Zionists purported to find in Diaspora Jews). Religion was perceived as a "protective covering" assumed by the nation during the Exile for the purpose of self-preservation. Once the nation was reassembled in its homeland, Jews would achieve dignity and security, and be defended by their own army. No longer would they need the protective covering of religion; the real Jewish culture would blossom forth, revealing "the true Jewish essence."

But now, more than a century after the founding of Zionism in Czarist Russia, eighty-five years after Herzl wrote *Der Judenstaat*, thirty-three years after the establishment of the state of Israel, historical developments have called into question most of these articles of faith.

The opposition to their ideas that Herzl and other early Zionists encountered from the outset among nearly all orthodox Jews should have warned them that something was wrong. These religious Jews did not find their existence "a problem," as did Herzl and his freethinking colleagues, nor did they consider themselves "abnormal." They believed that they were in exile, in the sense of living in an unredeemed historical world awaiting the Messiah, much like fundamentalist Christians consider themselves to be living in a state of original sin awaiting the Second Coming. And when they went to Palestine, they went as religious pilgrims to a holy place, not as pioneers bent on founding a new nation. To the orthodox Jew, the worship of God exists for its own sake; it is a sacrilege to view it as a means to a secular end, even if that end is the preservation of a people. Jews have a meaning only as servants of God, not as an ethnic group.

The Zionists were wrong. Religion was not a substitute for nationalism. Religion was positive, self-determined, unequivocal. Nationalism, however, was an anchor of identity for the Jew who had lost his religion. Nationalism was in some ways a Jewish reaction to rejection by the non-Jewish environment. It was a frustrated assimilation.

The issues raised in these long-ago debates have not been resolved by the passage of time. Rather, the Zionist

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"solution" has proved to be faulty on several counts.

First, a majority of the Jewish people did not wish to emigrate from North and South America to the Jewish homeland, thus casting doubt on the idea of a dispersed nation with an age-old yearning for a homeland. There has always been a dedicated Zionist hard core, and this was the group that founded Israel, led it and governed it. But many Jews go to Israel simply because they have nowhere else to go. When they do have the choice, as in the case of Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union, they prefer America. Indeed, most Jews leave their countries only under pressure, and Israel is one of their last choices for a destination. The continuing Diaspora is thus a matter of preference, not of necessity.

Second, the promise of Israel as a "haven for the Jewish people" has been proved false. Apart from occasional outbreaks of anti-Semitism elsewhere in the world, Israel is the only country (except Argentina and the Soviet Union) where being a Jew is dangerous, and it is the only Jewish community in the world that calls on other Jews to save it from "another Holocaust," a threat its founding was supposed to avert.

Third, the establishment of Israel was supposed to make the Jewish people economically self-sufficient and more productive. Jews would have their own national economy, with a full range of occupations open to them. The Israelis did indeed create a national economy, and quite a modern one at that, but the country is sinking deeper and deeper into foreign indebtedness and has been dependent since its inception on the largess of Jews abroad and on aid from the U.S. government.

The greatest paradox relates directly to Israel's lack of a cultural identity. No genuine Jewish national culture has yet developed in Israel. Israeli culture has little connection with the Jewish past; immigrant literature is an evocation of the "old country" rather than an expression of a living tradition. The culture of Israel is essentially the culture of a new nation, shallow in many respects, as cultures of new nations tend to be. Any sense of cultural continuity is apparent mainly among the religious, and this obviously means a religious continuity, not a nationalistic one. Indeed, in the residential areas of some Israeli cities one has a feeling of being not in Israel but in some Eastern European *shtetl*. Among secular Israelis, there is a strong feeling that Jewishness is irrelevant. Some of them identify themselves as "Israelis," not "Jews," while others debate whether they are "Israelis first and Jews second," or the reverse. So the return to the Jewish homeland, far from "making the Jew whole again," as the early Zionist thinkers predicted, made it possible to be an Israeli while ceasing to be a Jew. And in Israel there is none of the reinforcement of identity that comes from living in a non-Jewish world that regards one as Jewish. In fact, the claim of many Israelis that they are Zionists is unintentionally misleading. They use the word to denote patriotism, not an acceptance of an ideology.

The paradox is compounded by the fact that there *is* a secular, national Jewish culture, the Yiddish culture of Eastern Europe, whose most prominent spokesman is Isaac Bashevis Singer. This culture is carried on in the work of American (and European) Jewish writers, but it simply does not exist in Israel, and all attempts to revive it there have failed.

The present situation calls then for a re-examination of basic assumptions, which I can do only briefly here. In my view, the basic flaw in Zionism is the concept of "normalization." Significantly, Herzl himself gave the game away in his utopian Zionist novel *Altneuland*. The ideal Jewish state he described must win approval from a non-Jew, a haughty visiting Prussian nobleman, through whose eyes we observe the Jewish utopia and by whose values we judge it. As his book shows, Herzl viewed Jewish identity in the mirror of the gentile world, and what he saw reflected there made him become a Jewish nationalist. His values were those of the non-Jewish world, and by that standard Jews were obviously "abnormal" and had to be "normalized."

The very idea of "normalization" was a symptom of the loss of Jewish identity and the acceptance of the values of the non-Jewish world, and so Zionism meant nothing more than "nation building." A more realistic view of the Jewish situation necessitates discarding value-laden words like "normality" or "abnormality," and historical-philosophical speculations about the "genuine national characteristics" of the Jewish people, and recognizing that any group of people who adopt freely any way of life are just as "normal" as anybody else. The Jewish situation in the Diaspora is "abnormal" only by outworn rationales used to justify the nineteenth-century European nation-state.

But once it is established, a nation must follow the internal logic of self-preservation and perform certain basic functions. It must maintain law and order, be responsible to and for its citizens, refrain from interference in the domestic affairs of other nations, defend itself, honor its international obligations and develop its own identity and a sense of solidarity. Yet Zionism, which gave birth to the state of Israel, now interferes with its carrying out the functions of a proper state.

The modern state, whether it be a capitalist democracy or a Communist "popular democracy," comprises the totality of its citizenry. Being English or French is not an *ethnic* identity. Israel, by officially characterizing itself as a Jewish-Zionist state, placed its non-Jewish citizens in an ambiguous and in some ways inferior position. (In this, Israel resembles the ethnic states of Central and Eastern Europe that were created after World War I, whose inherent instability was one of the causes of World War II.) There also arose the problem of defining who was legally a Jew. The determination of Jewishness has devolved upon the rabbis (many of whom, ironically, are either non- or anti-Zionist), which contradicts the Zionist precept that Jews are a nation rather than a religion. (The religious aspect of the state also undermined Zionism's claim to have created a haven for persecuted Jews. For the definition of Jewishness in Adolph Hitler's Nuremberg Laws was quite different from the orthodox rabbinical one. As a result, many of the Jews murdered by Hitler would not be recognized as Jews under the Israeli Law of Return.) A permanent state of tension between the religious and the secular Jews in Israel was thus created.

Despite the political upheaval and legal contention this grave tension has engendered since the establishment of Israel, a precarious balance was maintained until the 1967 war. But the addition of 1.5 million non-Jews in the occupied territories, which Prime Minister Menachem Begin vows to incorporate permanently into the state, has radically distorted the country's social structure. The Palestinian Arabs, who make up about 35 percent of this group, are

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treated as a subject population with no political rights. If they wish to become citizens, they must swear allegiance to the Israeli government, despite their own sense of nationalism. Needless to say, they are kept under Israeli control not by consent but by force, and their resentment further destabilizes Israeli society.

In addition, foreign Jews, who are not Israeli citizens, have a status and influence in the country that non-Jewish citizens do not have. Rabbi Meir Kahane of the Jewish Defense League could thus bring his American hoodlums to Israel and aggravate tensions on the West Bank with near impunity. Non-Jewish Israeli citizens like the Druzes, who serve in the Israeli Army and who have suffered many casualties in Israel's wars, are not permitted to buy residences in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, where noncitizens who are Jewish are welcome. Such practices, of course, dilute the sense of citizenship and territorial cohesion and undermine the country's political structure. They create a nonterritorial nation, and this contradicts the idea of the state as a territorial entity.

Finally, the Israeli authorities feel morally justified in demanding the allegiance of Jews everywhere. As a result, American Jews petition their government on Israel's behalf and mobilize Congressional support for it. Israel could hardly survive without Jewish-American support, while American Jews could get along without Israel. This again reverses the role of a Jewish state envisioned by the Zionists, who assumed such a state would "normalize" the Jewish people. Now it is the Jewish state that has become "abnormal."

Some would argue that if Israel was founded by an "abnormal" people, it cannot itself be "normal," and that it must be accepted in its uniqueness, which reflects the uniqueness of the Jewish people. What I have tried to show is that such a uniqueness is contrary to the very nature of the nation-state and necessarily undermines it. The unresolved question of which comes first, Jewish interests or Israeli interests—and how to distinguish between the two, for that matter—makes it difficult to define Israel's true national interests.

For example, Prime Minister Begin says that the West Bank is vital to Israel's security. On the other hand, the inhabitants of the areas to be annexed are hostile to Israel, and the effort to "pacify" them is a constant drain on Israel's human and material resources. There is also the inevitable brutalization of conqueror and conquered. Any territorial gain is thus outweighed by its political, moral and social costs. Reasons of state would call for an attempt to reconcile the Palestinians to Israeli rule by granting them full political and civil rights, making them equal to Israeli Jews and fully integrating them into Israeli society. But equal rights would mean that the Arabs were entitled to their own Law of Return, which would permit the refugees of 1948 and 1967 to come back to their former homeland. In view of their much higher birthrate, even without the refugees, Arabs would equal or outnumber Jews within two decades, meaning the end of Israel as a Jewish state. Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely. In Israel's case, the term "national interest" depends then on what you define as "the nation."

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Reason should teach us that the national interest is whatever promotes and strengthens Israel as a normal state. The national interest would seem to call for full equality of all citizens before the law, irrespective of race, origin or creed (Israel would not thereby lose its distinctive character any more than France has ceased to be French and America American) and the integration of the state into the international community. Such a course would lead to Israel's development as an independent entity, connected with the rest of the Jewish world in the same way that the United States has cultural and emotional affinities with the rest of the English-speaking world, but not obliging it or being obliged by it. If Israel had followed such a course, relying in the last analysis on its inherent interests and capabilities and not resorting to Jewish help except in emergencies, I believe that it would never have tried to settle and annex the territories conquered in 1967. It would have realized that its resources were inadequate for such an undertaking. It would have tried instead to reach the kind of settlement with its neighbors that it reached with Egypt—peace in exchange for territories.

The continuation of present policies, aggravated in particular by Begin's Messianic obsessions, could lead to disaster for Israel and the region. If Jewish public opinion abroad were not so deferential to the Israeli government and dared to voice the criticisms that many Jews do have toward Israel, perhaps we Israelis would have long ago adjusted to reality, for our own good.

Aid to Israel, then, and identification with Israel by Jews living abroad, appear contradictory. Such aid and identification were essential at the earlier stages of Israel's development, for without them Israel could never have absorbed mass immigration and undertaken the development of its economy while at the same time maintaining a large defense establishment against the hostile Arab world. But this devoted, unquestioning support has (in spite of signs that the Arab world may be ready for some kind of accommodation with Israel, as exemplified in the Camp David accords) more recently enabled the Begin government to launch its settlement policy, to refuse to compromise on the issue of the Palestinians, to take steps toward the annexation of the West Bank and the Golan Heights and to maintain the enormous military machine necessary for the implementation of these intransigent policies.

Yet these very policies are plunging Israel into ever-deepening debt and political isolation, and they are causing the cessation of Jewish immigration and a steady flow of emigrants from Zion. Thus the more Israel is "supported," the further it sinks into the mire, and the more "abnormal" it becomes. Before the 1967 war, there were already prospects that Israel might soon become economically independent. But postwar aggrandizement has plunged the country into hopeless economic and political dependence.

To understand how the Israeli government was able to achieve control over the opinions of Jews abroad, I shall refer to Herzl's Prussian nobleman's standards as the yardstick of the ideal Jewish state. Jewish support of Israel derives from feelings of solidarity, responsibility and pride, as well as a desire to expiate the guilt some felt for not having done enough to resist the Holocaust. But would the feelings of identification and pride, particularly among those for whom Israel has become the focus of Jewish identity, have been as intense if Israel were a peaceful, prosperous, uneventful, "normal" country, a Middle Eastern Switzerland, peacefully engaged in commerce and industry and needing no help from Jew or Gentile? What really arouses the enthusiasm of so many Jews, it seems to me, is the constant drama of danger, war and military success, the very features that the imagined Prussian Junker would presumably most admire in the Jewish state. This warrior image, which has traditionally been antithetical to the very concept of Judaism and was held in contempt by generations of Jews, has become the most cherished characteristic of Israel in Jewish eyes.

Now Diaspora Jews, for all their admiration of this warrior state, prefer to live in safer, more comfortable and less "exalted" environments. But by identifying with the Israelis ("we are one people," as the slogan goes), they become heroes by proxy. This enhances their self-respect, because they believe that the non-Jewish world has always respected force above everything else. In short, their sense of identity depends on their reflection in the eyes of others.

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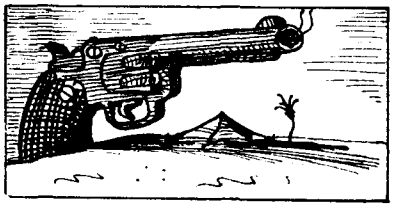
The extent to which some orthodox Jews have unconsciously fallen for these alien values, which have fused with the ancient sense of Jewish exclusivity to produce a particularly intolerant nationalism, is evidenced by the phenomenon of Gush Emunim in Israel and its religious supporters abroad.

If my conjectures are right, the reason that Israel has such a strong hold on Jews abroad is that it enables them to lead a vicarious existence and provides them with a borrowed identity. It releases them from the task of figuring out themselves what Jewishness really means in the here and now. Instead, they identify with an image of an idealized Israel that can do no wrong (like the old Communist true-believer for whom Russia could do no wrong) and that in reality is antithetical to traditional Jewish values. This visionary Israel is designed to show the non-Jewish world that Jews are as good at the power and violence game as non-Jews. The real, though unconscious, message Diaspora Jews intend to convey to non-Jews, particularly in America, is that their values are the same, that they have "an old country" too, which is as adept at the power game as the other "old countries" (or their adopted new countries). In short, this vicarious identification with Israel and Israeli military might is a roundabout way to a more complete integration (or "normalization") in their host societies.

Diaspora Jews pay for these emotional compensations with lavish financial and political support for Israel, encouraging Israel to act out the "superman" role for which it is being paid. But this role prevents Israel from working out its own identity in its own way. This, in turn, prevents the Jewish nation from achieving a real "normalization" and plunges it into the graver dangers outlined above. Both Israelis and overseas Jews are playacting roles instead of addressing themselves to the important questions of their real interests and identities.

Jews abroad should review their support for Israel and reconsider what its aims should be. Israel is now so desperately dependent on their aid that it would face disaster if it were withdrawn. Jews abroad should determine how their support is used, and they should speak their minds and direct their assistance in ways that will enable Israel eventually to dispense with it, instead of becoming increasingly addicted to it and corrupted by it.

Vicarious living could be psychologically harmful to Diaspora Jews in the long run. But the effect on Israel of playing a role contrary to its true nature and interests, which prevents it from becoming a normal nation, could be more than psychological; it could be a matter of life and death. □



ENDING AMBIGUITY

Reflections on The Palestinians

EDWARD W. SAID

For the first time since 1948 there is no way to avoid resolving the Palestinian question. However much Israel and the United States try to submerge it, the reality turns up to confront them. This is a measure of the strength of Palestinian self-affirmation and resistance. The battle of wills has nevertheless exacted high costs in human suffering and increased militarism.

Still, it is widely agreed that the Palestinians are a national community. A mere ten years ago, the Palestinian movement was a local entity; today it is regarded as a powerful international force. Because of its proven ability to rally all segments of the Palestinian population (in Israel, on the occupied West Bank and Gaza, in exile all over the world) in the face of enormous difficulties, the Palestine Liberation Organization has the right to speak for Palestinian nationalism, as well as to serve the Palestinian community politically, militarily, culturally and socially.

We commonly assume that the politics of the Palestinian question are symmetrical, with the conflict between Zionism and Palestinian nationalism at center stage. There is also the widespread assumption that the search for peace is essentially "pragmatic." (One conjures up pictures of diplomats earnestly searching for the right formula.) And above all, there is the illusion that some reasonableness lies hidden beneath the surface violence and waste, to be rescued if only misunderstanding, ideological error and wanton foolishness could be argued away.

Most of this is near-nonsense. The struggle for Palestine was always unequal; it was won by Israel's more efficient political organization, supported by a ruthless military machine, legitimized by a brilliant and, until recently, virtually unopposed propaganda apparatus. The misleading ideas I referred to above, however, reflect the packaging of the Palestinian question by the American media. It is the media, plus the corps of overpaid, intellectually underdeveloped Middle East area "experts," that ask, "Why don't Palestinians recognize Israel's right to exist?" Or, "How can Israel be sure that if it gives up the West Bank, the Palestinians will be content?" Or, the ultimate in cliché-ridden moralism, "Where are the Palestinian equivalents of Peace Now?" Note that each of these questions assumes symmetry, pragmatism and underlying reasonableness in a situation where these qualities scarcely exist. What is more to the point, the questions are repressive in the full psychoanalytic meaning of that word.

The questions, and the assumptions behind them, conceal a terrible reality. Take symmetry as a case in point. To ask Palestinians why they won't recognize Israel makes sense only if the inverse of the same question is put to the Israelis. Then we would get answers like: "The Palestinians do not exist, except, perhaps, as Arabs of Eretz Israel." How can Palestinian recognition of Israel now mean anything more than confirmation of the Palestinian plight? Much the same dissolving of illusions occurs when pragmatism is tested against the obdurate facts of colonization and land expropriation. Palestinians then fall back on phrases like "total liberation" and "the Arab nation" to sublimate the mixture of instinctive rebelliousness and automatic rejection that sometimes describes their

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existence—along with idealism, a heroic will to resist injustice and a resourcefulness in adversity that has puzzled the world. Well then, what is really being repressed? Two things. One is an awful past that governs the present more than it ought to. The second is a future that seems determined by the present course of events, a future that, if unmodified now, will be unacceptable tomorrow. But there is another, alternative future —not a political scientist's future but a future that, as a Palestinian active in this struggle for many years, I have been working toward. The nature of this future is a matter of interpretation, of course, but so too are the Palestinian issue and Middle East politics. The real question is, to what sort of self-determination are we willing to commit ourselves? What kind of just and democratic future do we envision?

Let us start with the repressed past. Two key events come immediately to mind: the history of anti-Semitism culminating in the trauma of World War II and, for Palestinians, the dispossession indelibly inscribed in one year—1948. In each case, a special past is directly linked to a special horror. This, as Middle East scholar Eqbal Ahmad has said, has understandably given rise to "two unequal communities of fear." Worse yet, a politics has been created that attempts to insure that the past cannot be repeated, or that seeks to return to a period before the trauma occurred, or that postulates a future that is essentially oblivious to the existence of another, opposing population.

An inevitable consequence of these repressions and affirmations is war. For both the Israelis and the Palestinians (and other Arabs as well) the present situation is dominated by the logic of war. For Palestinians this is not something about which to engage in "rhetoric." Each day, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank grows more entrenched and oppressive, the inexorable erosion of Palestinian political and human rights increases in scope, and the Israeli state's mobilization of hatred against the exiled Palestinians surpasses what was thought impossible only the day before. What are Palestinians supposed to do or think? Menachem Begin tells the Palestinians: Accept our narrowing concept of autonomy, and those of you not fortunate enough to live under Israeli rule on the West Bank can either die in exile or be killed. Ronald Reagan and Alexander Haig tell them to recognize Israel's right to exist, which means recognizing a state unlike any other in the world, a state that has no set borders,* that has no constitution (but rather basic laws that discriminate against more than 15 percent of the population solely because it is "non-Jewish"), that has a military establishment that acts in total defiance of international laws and the laws of war, that has no acceptable response to *any* proposals for Palestinian self-rule, much less self-determination. It is the Palestinians who must suffer; their original sin was not a determination to "destroy Israel"—whatever that foolish cant phrase means. It was being driven out of Palestine and now demanding restitution.

The conciliatory gestures being sought from the Palestinians, whether by Europeans who seek Palestinian recognition of Israel or by liberals who want the Palestinians to renounce violence in the abstract, simply ornament, without in any way alleviating, the grim fact that Begin and many other Israelis neither want nor care about the Palestinians' recognition. Note that it is not just P.L.O. recognition they speak about; it is any Palestinian recognition. And such recognition was effectively ruled out at Camp David in 1978 by the exclusion of the Palestinians from the negotiations. None of the parties actually care much about the Camp David agreements. They serve mainly to validate retrospectively actions already taken. Thus the United States uses the agreements to increase military sales in the region (enhancing the peace was the rationale for the sale of the Awacs to the Saudis). Israel's unending supply of American weapons (its reward for Camp David) provides military support for its settlers and helps in the expropriation of more Arab land. And Egypt received U.S. arms and support in return for a bit of regional blustering, also as a result of Camp David.

The Palestinians face a landscape frozen by Israeli and U.S. policy. And yet, there are a few breaks in the ice. A year ago, the European Economic Community timidly advanced the proposition that the Palestinians and the P.L.O. were one and the same, and that both were necessary for peace. Similar sentiments have more recently been expressed in other quarters. Three former American Presidents and one former national security adviser have stressed the need for talking to the P.L.O. Even if these shifts had more to do with combating Jewish pressure against the Awacs deal in the United States than with acknowledging the P.L.O.'s legitimacy, they were important indicators of possible changes in the Reagan Administration's policy, designed ultimately to serve the Department of Defense and the multinational corporations. The same double-edged tactic is evident in the calculated interest the Administration has shown in the eight-point Saudi peace plan proposed in August. But there are more important signs of change elsewhere.

Hermann Eilts, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt and one of the protagonists at Camp David, recently recommended that the part of the agreements pertaining to Palestinian autonomy be declared "demonstrably flawed" so that the "moderate Arab view" can be incorporated into the search for peace. Other members of the Carter Administration who were involved in the Camp David accords, notably William Quandt

*According to Michael Bar Zohar, David Ben-Gurion deliberately left out any mention of borders in May 1948 when he officially declared Israel's existence.

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and Harold Saunders, have expressed similar views, although they have done so in so maddeningly clotted a prose and with so many curtsies to Israeli sensibilities that one feels they were more worried than convinced by what they were saying.

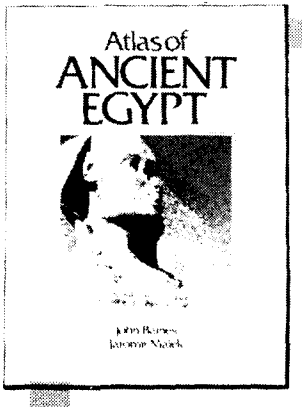
In other areas of American society a change in attitudes toward the Palestinians has been gradually taking place. Delegates attending the recent American Writers Congress in New York City listened sympathetically to several speakers who expressed the Palestinian view. Israeli policies on Lebanon and the occupied territories have been criticized on frequent occasions; for example, no one today speaks of a "benign occupation," the phrase of a few seasons ago.

On one hand, there seems to be a genuine desire on the part of most Americans to know more about the Palestinians, and on the other, a growing belief that it is Israel's intransigence that is delaying the peace, not the Palestinians' more and more justifiable resistance. A number of church and foreign-policy groups (e.g., the American Friends Service Committee and the National Council of Churches) have urged the United States to take steps toward recognizing the P.L.O. And, in addition to a few liberal columnists like Anthony Lewis of *The New York Times*, many prominent and ordinary Jewish-Americans have begun to speak about the Palestinian question, as well as about their dissatisfaction with Israeli policy.

Little of this, however, addresses the substance of the Palestinian issue, which is of course the Palestinians themselves. Indeed, the anti-Begin diatribes that one finds in places like *Time* magazine are usually accompanied by strenuous attacks on the P.L.O. for its supposed inflexibility, its terrorism, its unrepresentative quality and so on. While I think that these charges are false and stem from a kind of petulant chagrin that the United States is not getting its way in the Islamic world, their frequency is symptomatic of a grave problem. Israel is now perceived by a growing number of people as having very little to offer the region except macho violence and steady expansionism. But it is also true that the international community has not turned to the Palestinians for answers to the problem. This is not just a matter of Palestinians being unable to address the West. I refuse to allow that the West can serve as a moral jury for the Third World. Nor do I believe that there can be any substitute for concentrated *Palestinian* effort toward self-determination. But what worries me is that the bankruptcy of Israeli policy has not somehow produced an irresistibly attractive Palestinian response.

It is important that we understand the reason for this. The conflict in Palestine had its origins in the colonial period before World War I. This is not to say that Zionism was a direct offshoot of imperialism—that is too reductive a description. But it is true that to the native inhabitants of Palestine, Zionism was colonialism. The whole historical record shows no important, effective contradiction of this ethos. Even the left Zionists as well as the Jabotinsky Revisionists regarded the native Arabs as inferior and culturally incapable of participating in the Zionist dream.

The colonial period ended for the rest of the Asian and African world with World War II, but in Palestine, it has



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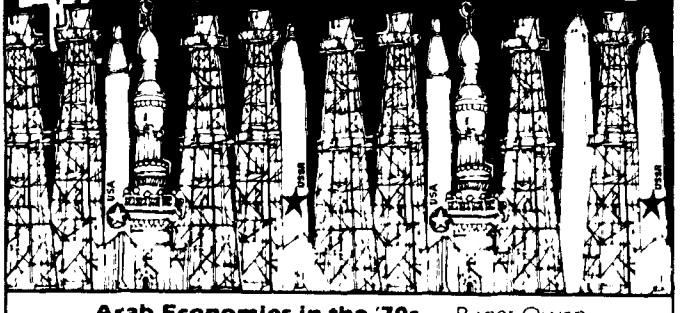

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not ended, at least so far as the Palestinians are concerned. The Palestinians still see themselves as colonized by an alien European population, which is hostile to their culture, alienated from the region and in what seems to be a state of permanent tension with the rest of the postcolonial world.

What we have then is a fundamental disparity between Arab nations enjoying a postcolonial period of unprecedented prosperity and the Palestinians ensnared in a vestigial colonialism. This disharmony highlights the contradiction between the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab world. Indeed, we must identify a number of disjunctions between the Palestinians' struggle for self-determination and its local, regional and world contexts. There is the obvious disjunction between Palestinian nationalism and the Israeli state; there is the disjunction between Palestinian nationalism and the rest of the Arab world, and there is the disjunction between the Palestinian issue as an international question and the world context.

Since some of these disjunctions are obvious, I won't try to discuss them exhaustively. To start with the Arab context, I know of no better summary formulation than that given recently by Malcolm Kerr, a Middle East scholar at U.C.L.A.:

> The 1970s are likely to go down in history as the decade in which the Arabs missed the boat. At a time when fate dropped in their laps a spectacular opportunity to tackle their massive development requirements and build Arab unity on the basis of fruitful economic cooperation, the Arab leaders instead merely established new patterns of wastefulness and political rivalry. The scandalous expenditure of many billions of dollars each year on useless construction projects in Saudi Arabia, and the unceasing orgy of killing and destruction in Lebanon, are the twin hallmarks of their failure. It is noteworthy that these two operations are both "joint ventures" in which the Arab world as a whole actively participates, collaboratively in the one case, combatively in the other; and in both cases parties in the outside world are major participants also, fellow-builders, as it were, of the new Arab order.

What Kerr charitably leaves out of this is the almost total absence of democratic freedoms in the Arab world, an absence that is in disgraceful contrast with the claims made by Arabs on behalf of justice and peace in Palestine.

It is no wonder then that the greatest successes of the Palestinian movement have been international, outside the regional and Israeli contexts. But this is not entirely encouraging. Beginning in 1974 with the meeting of the Palestine National Council and the Rabat, Morocco, summit, and continuing until today, there has been a consistent and cumulative change in the Palestinian position in the form of self-restraint. I refer to all those resolutions that call for Palestinian statehood in a partitioned Palestine and imply a settlement of the conflict through negotiation and mutual understanding with Israel. Most non-Arabs cannot understand what those self-restraints have meant for both Palestinians and other Arabs, what they have required in the way of sacrifice and bitter acknowledgement of reality. And one must never minimize the truth that the Palestinians mandating these sacrifices and acknowledgements are the very same people evicted from their homes a scant thirty years ago, some of whose compatriots now live either under Israeli military occupation or in exile, slanderously referred to and attacked as terrorists or mere anonymous refugees.

In my opinion, the sharper the contrast between regional and Israeli realities on the one hand, and Palestinian self-determination on the other, the clearer the program for a future Palestinian state should be. I want to say this as clearly as possible in order not to leave any doubts as to what I mean. We seem to have entered a post-Sadat phase dominated by the Saudi peace plan, Reaganism and a more and more embattled and paranoid Israel. The mix is not a promising one, which is not to say categorically that progress on the Palestinian issue will be impossible. Quite the contrary. One can foresee various pressures and circumstances—not excluding a limited war between Israel, Syria and the Palestinians—that will break the impasse and sweep away forever the distracting charade of the autonomy talks. As I said, the regional and Israeli contexts are in sharp discord with a Palestinian actuality whose premises are essentially libertarian and anticolonial. The strongest political forces in the region—the Arab states and Israel—are likely to shape the movement toward Palestinian self-determination. Even so, some form of Palestinian statehood is not an impossible dream, despite this depressing situation.

But at this point in a discussion of the prospects for self-determination, political forecasting and pragmatic problem-solving must leave off and the kind of committed interpretation of the future I spoke of earlier must take over. The history of the postcolonial world is strewn with destroyed hopes and falsified ideals; independence and self-determination have often given way to repressive bureaucracies, corrupt oligarchies and tyrannical military regimes. A part—and perhaps only a very small part—of the reason for this debasement of the early ideals of the struggle for self-determination is that too few participants in the struggle gave much thought to clarifying both the present and the future course of things before those things "happened" and became irreversible. It is crucial that the Palestinians take advantage of their period of exile in order to formulate the kind of self-determination they want. The alternative is a future imposed on us by the cartel of international and regional powers, whose main objective is a solution to the Palestinian problem that produces "stability."

There is something antiseptic about the sound of "stability," but we should not be misled. Our struggle is not just about land and sovereignty; it is about the right to *have* land and sovereignty. What brought the Palestinian struggle its immense worldwide appeal was not simply Arab oil, or anti-Americanism (as the likes of Jeane Kirkpatrick and Daniel Patrick Moynihan never seem to understand), or pro-Soviet disinformation, or disguised anti-Semitism; it was the recognition that the struggle for Palestinian rights pitted ordinary human beings who have been unfairly dispossessed of their land and heritage because they were not white, European and advanced against an essentially European movement claiming a *superior* right. So the force of the Palestinian struggle readily spills over from specific grievances concerning land and sovereignty into higher issues of justice, human rights, democracy and true peace. The energies of the Palestinian struggle require answers to the questions: "Who rules and by what right?" "Who holds land, and who gets privileges?" And, "What race, religion or creed has any right to claim sovereignty and authority over the others?" These

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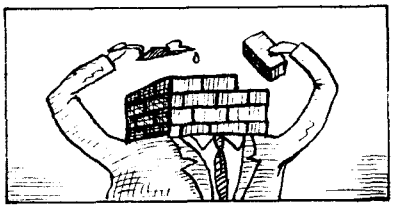
troubling questions would be silenced by the "stability" that is being called for in many places today.

All the more reason for Palestinians to specify what their political program for self-determination is. Doubtless this must be regarded as another of the onerously self-limiting and self-restraining tasks we have to impose on ourselves. But it, rather than the tactic of withholding recognition of Israel as a bargaining chip, is also the source of our political power, such as it is. Hitherto, we have been content to indicate our political decisions in a guarded, almost cryptic way. For instance, we have let others surmise that the resolutions passed by the Palestine National Council sessions of 1974, 1977, 1979 and 1981 were all parts of a concerted movement within the Palestinian community toward settlement and a political solution. Ironically, our enemies have disparaged these resolutions while our superpatriots have denounced them as "concessions." What we have yet to do is to say exactly what it is that we now struggle for, as we move with much difficulty and suffering toward self-determination.

Doing this does not mean making new concessions. It is a matter of courageously addressing the people who must be involved in Palestinian self-determination—Palestinians and, yes, Israelis and Jews. We have always been against territorial expansionism, against a polity based on race, religion or creed, against unequal economic and social practices, against power that is unaccountable to moral and ethical review. These values must now be embodied in the principles of Palestinian self-determination, and in such a way that the Israelis are offered something so clear and of such unmistakable human worth that they are drawn into political discussions. The time of hiding behind phrases like "the liquidation of Zionism" is past. We must say clearly and directly to the Israelis what we propose to share with them as inhabitants of Palestine—other than mutual annihilation. They must not be allowed to believe that their only alternative to permanent war is to be "driven into the sea."

Who can doubt that this is a major, immensely difficult and complicated step to take? Yet such a thing can be done only by the Palestinians. It cannot be done by individuals alone; it must be a national effort. But individuals can now declare unequivocally that the time for speaking clearly has arrived. Ambiguity about our purposes is a useful tactic in the short run, but it cannot be a productive long-term strategy. Unless we produce a political discourse today that specifies as well as embodies what our struggle for self-determination is about, and unless we do so in a way that does not betray the values that have fueled our struggle, we risk entering the final stages leading to self-determination unprepared for its outcome, a Palestinian state. If such a state is simply a mirror image of other states in the region, it would be a monster. □



Israel and the American Left

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

At the moment, the United States is governed by an Administration that indulges Israeli extremism on the West Bank of the Jordan River, and that supports anti-Jewish extremism in South America and South Africa and Saudi Arabia. To call this a paradox would be an overstatement. What is striking is that many leading intellectuals are prepared to support the government on the second count because they sympathize with it on the first.

This article will try to deal with the effect of the Middle East conflict on American liberals. It will thus, necessarily, be an article largely about Jews. There was a time when Israel was accepted by most liberals as a democratic state with many socialist features and as embodying an affirmative victory over the dark racial prejudices that in many ways precipitated its birth. Today, when Israel puts itself forward as a sturdy ally in the cold war and as a reliable bridgehead against Arab and Iranian ferment, there has been a certain, how shall we say—coarsening of the Zionist position. If Israel has become the natural friend of the overdogs in America and elsewhere, will this not have a consequence or two for liberal Jews and thus for American liberalism? A limited but significant number of commentators have already answered "yes" to this question, and striven to win over doubting liberals to a new pole on the right.

It is impossible to reduce the complexity of the argument to a single example. Still, two slight anecdotes from the contemporary scene may help to sketch an introduction.

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of The Nation.

In June of this year, liberal circles in New York City were briefly but noticeably convulsed by an exchange in *The Village Voice*. Jack Newfield, a grizzled foot-soldier in the stage-army of the good, accused his colleague Alexander Cockburn of concealing anti-Semitic attitudes beneath a facile anti-Zionism. Newfield's article, though clumsily written and argued, bore all the symptoms of a long-pent-up misgiving about socialist attitudes toward Israel and Zionism. But it did not, or could not, confine itself to the Middle East. It accused Cockburn of being a closet Stalinist and "anti-West."

Some months after that suggestive exchange, President Ronald Reagan cracked enough fingers and femurs to get his Awacs deal past the Senate. On the night of the vote, ABC's *Nightline* featured a three-way debate between Faisal Al-Hegelan, the Saudi ambassador to the United States, Yitzhak Rabin, former Prime Minister of Israel, and Richard Allen, Reagan's ultra-reactionary (and pro-Menachem Begin) National Security Adviser. Since the Saudi ambassador was almost incoherent with self-satisfaction, it came down to Rabin versus Allen. Why, Allen was asked, had America abandoned its written pledge to eschew sales of strategic arms to the Arab world?

Well, he replied, the situation had changed. Iran was in chaos, Ethiopia didn't look too friendly, Libya seemed positively menacing. Anwar el-Sadat had been slain. A certain notorious superpower stood by ready to exploit these distressing developments. So, what Saudi wanted, Saudi was going to get (and no nonsense, by the by, about *them* recognizing Israel's right to exist). Rabin sat through this with an air of distinct discomfort. Weren't those *Is-*

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rael's hardware arguments he was hearing? Wasn't it just that reasoning that had impelled him, when he was Israel's ambassador to Washington, to urge American Jews to vote for Richard Nixon in 1972? Hadn't Israel stood by Haile Selassie and the Shah until the last ditch? Allen's proposition that a perceived threat implies the promiscuous armament of the nearest "bulwark" may seem like a non sequitur anyway (it is). But to Rabin, and to some others, it only sounds like a non sequitur when it isn't being applied to Israel. The best the former ambassador and Prime Minister could do was to threaten faintly that Israel might keep the Sinai. All in all, it was not an auspicious evening for Israeli "social democracy."

This is not the first time that Israel's policy has yielded unlooked-for results. In the 1950s, Israel became an ally of British and French colonial policy. It supported the French government's murderous repression in Algeria. It was a junior partner in the 1956 Suez crisis provoked by Britain and France. It shared "intelligence" and military information with Paris and London in a common front against Arab nationalism. This had two effects (beyond speeding the farcical collapse of British and French influence). It isolated those in Israel who sought a *modus vivendi* with the Arabs. And it compromised Jews on the British and French left while strengthening the hand of conservative forces. So long as loyalty to Israel was an issue in the conflict, there were many people who felt that the Anglo-French colonial policy could not be criticized quite as it deserved. Though, as ever, Jewish radicals were in the forefront of protest, there were many others, Jews and non-Jews, who were fatally ambivalent. The French Socialist Party took decades to recover.

Both of these features are present in the current and continuing argument in America. And so is a third one, though its outlines can only just be discerned. Once the French right had no further use for Israeli support, it moved back to a more traditional position. As soon as Iraq became a better customer and partner than Israel, there was what might politely be called a "tilt" in that direction. And when Israel protested at this poor return on friendship, many in the salons of Paris were overheard to say that that was the trouble with Jews. There will come a time when the American right, for all its unwelcome support for Israel's current settlement policy in Palestine, decides in its turn to support Israel as the rope supports the hanging man.

(Sadly, the Israeli establishment has seen this point and drawn the wrong conclusion from it. It is common to hear Israeli spokesmen justify their hard line by saying that they do not wish to be abandoned "like South Vietnam or Taiwan." By appealing for support as an encircled and embattled state, Israel has moved toward psychological identification with the pariah community. Hence some of its less palatable alliances in the Third World.)

The future attitude of the right toward Israel is, strictly speaking, outside the scope of this article. I want to propose that the evolution of Israel into a colonial and military power has already placed American liberals in a very ambivalent and uncomfortable spot. I hope we may take it for granted that, as Irving Howe and Bernard Rosenberg put it a few years ago in an essay in *The New Conservatives* (New American Library):

> The overwhelming thrust of Jewish thought and writing in America these past several decades has been liberal, notably more so than in the population at large; and whatever radicalism we have had in America has found disproportionate support among Jews.

For the sake of symmetry, let me add the natural corollary Howe and Rosenberg made:

> It is hardly a secret that the number of Jews active in liberal, protest, radical and civil libertarian movements is highly disproportionate.

The Howe-Rosenberg essay, which makes a convenient point of entry to the argument, was titled "Are American Jews Turning to the Right?" In answer, it gave a much qualified "not necessarily." It stressed racial factors and the undeniable improvement of the socioeconomic position of Jews in the United States. It gave some attention to the evolution of *Commentary* magazine under the stewardship of Norman Podhoretz (concluding that his mounting attacks on the left did not yet amount to a neoconservative position), and it emphasized the security and the prosperity of American Jews.

Howe and Rosenberg fairly concluded that there had been no general rightward shift among Jews. What they did *not* do, except in the most tentative manner, was to scrutinize the influence of Israel in shaping the answers to their crucial original question. When the authors did do this, they preferred to stress ideological and even psychological factors. Discussing the predicament of Jews, they wrote:

> Black antagonism . . . is linked in their minds with global anti-Semitism and the enmity of Arabs toward Israel. Personal fright on the streets, poor public schools, a meritocracy in decline—all merge *psychically* with the precariousness of Israel and the mortification of Soviet Jewry. Who can easily separate in such reactions the warranted concern from the "paranoid" excess? [Emphasis added.]

This approaches the root of the matter. Since the days of Hubert Humphrey there has been a measurable decline in the Jewish vote for liberal causes and positions. But this decline has not been as sharp as Milton Himmelfarb's electoral analysis in *Commentary* would have us believe. Nor is it traceable to any one issue. Rather there is a certain nexus of emotions involved—very much like those described by Howe and Rosenberg. Clearly, the question of Israel is near the heart of this confusion, and if the left fails to recognize it, the right does not.

The furthest that Howe and Rosenberg would go in this direction was to state, cautiously:

> Yet the *paradox* that must be recognized is that insofar as Israel functions—must function—as a state dealing with other states, its impact upon American Jews is—perhaps must be—conservative. [Emphasis added.]

Note the throat-clearing and the conditional in that thoughtful sentence. The key word is "paradox." I want to argue that, increasingly, there is nothing *paradoxical* about positions that favor Israel's policies and are highly conservative; that there is now a better "fit" between Zionism* and conservatism than

* All shorthands are odious, but very few are dispensable. Some define "Zionism" as the end of exile and the ingathering of all Jews. Jacobo Timerman defines it as "the national liberation movement of the Jewish people." Most Arabs define it as a theory of racist colonization. George Orwell said of it that it had "the usual characteristics of a nationalist movement, but the American version of it seems to be more violent and malignant than the British." Others on the left have seen it, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, as the Jewish version of self-determination. I use it here to mean those who accept the rationale of Israel's actions as a state even when they disagree with some or many of its specific policies.

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ever before, and that this has exacted a high price from the American liberal coalition. Irving Kristol once wrote, crassly, that a neoconservative was a liberal who had been mugged by reality. I would not wish to borrow his pseudo-intellectual method. But, as one of the hired pens of the New Right and the Reagan Administration, he has hit on the ghost of a point. Many of those who have moved rightward are former liberal Zionists disturbed by the resentment of ghetto dwellers and repelled by the Third World attitude toward Israel.

Let me define what I mean by the use of a counterexample. Writing in *Commentary* almost two years ago, Midge Decter packed the whole problem into fifty words:

> In a world full of ambiguities and puzzlements, one thing is absolutely easy both to define and locate: that is the Jewish interest. The continued security and, in those happy places where the word applies—well-being of Jews, worldwide, rests with a strong, vital, prosperous, self-confident United States.

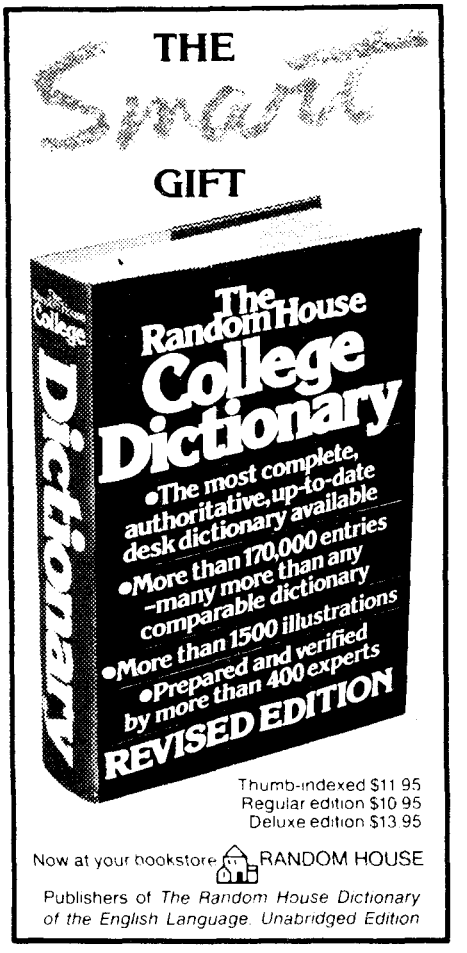
This is question-begging on a Homeric scale. "Security" is of course a well-known code word. (Is Israel more or less secure for holding Arab territory?) And we all know what some people mean by a "strong" United States. But the idea that the issue is an "easy" one, devoid of ambiguities and puzzlements, is breathtaking. In order to minimize misunderstanding, I state my own position, which is that the problem is highly complex and sensitive. And that Jewish security and well-being depends, perhaps rather more than other people's, on the defeat of chauvinism everywhere. And that the Israeli ruling establishment, both the Labor and the Likud parties, has moved away from this position. And that those in the United States who call themselves Zionists have, as a consequence, wavered in their traditional allegiances. Inevitably, this has led to confusion among liberals and intellectuals—a confusion that can only intensify as Israel becomes more conservative. The idea of Begin as an "aberration" used to be convenient as an escape clause, but it now lacks the crucial merit of plausibility.

I have the impression that Howe has somewhat modified his own position to take account of this. In a recent interview with me, he said that "Israel has replaced liberalism as the secular religion of American Jews." This suggests, to put it no higher, that coexistence between the two commitments is becoming problematic.

Why should this not be the case? The Jewish people have the same right to a "state dealing with other states" as do any other people. They have no less right to form opportunistic alliances, purchase weapons, impress neighboring countries and suppress inconvenient minorities. There is no categorical reason to criticize Israeli policies any more than those of Iraq, the Philippines or China. What makes the argument bite hard on American life is the *real* paradox, unidentified either by Howe or by Podhoretz, that Jewish people in the Diaspora do have a general interest in resisting forces of bigotry and reaction, whereas, at least in the short term, the state of Israel does not. Indeed, Israeli leaders have an occasional interest in actually *allying* with such forces. And, sad to say, many of the policies of that state—especially in the Third World and on the West Bank—positively *appeal* to those who do not normally care for Jews. Let me attempt to give a few recent and important examples.

Perhaps the first time that the realization of such a collusion between Israel and the American right occurred to a large number of people simultaneously was when then Ambassador Rabin exceeded his diplomatic status to urge that Jewish-Americans vote for Nixon. But in 1972, there were many to argue that he had made a slip—even if an emblematic one. Now, that view would be very much harder to defend. An episode that threw the issue of Israel and the right into sharp relief took place in New York City in November 1980. It showed, like my earlier vignettes, that uncritical attitudes toward Israel have a way of rebounding on Jewish interests, and on the liberal politics that were once inextricable from them. (Nixon's anti-Semitism is now better known than it was in 1972.)

At a gala dinner for the centenary of Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky, the right-wing Zionist ideologue, Prime Minister Begin pinned a Jabotinsky medal—one of a very limited number to be conferred—on the swollen breast of the Rev. Jerry Falwell. Many liberal Jews, most notably Rabbi Alexander Schindler, were outraged by this brash endorsement and said so in public. Was it not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Falwell's movement that had implied (at the least) that God was indifferent to the Jews? What was Begin, who if anything overstates the intimacy between Jews and scripture, doing with this character? The Rabbi soon got his answer. Writing in the *Jewish Week-American Examiner*, Herbert Zweibon, Erich Isaac and Rael Jean Isaac (author of scurrilous attacks on the Institute for Policy Studies in *Mainstream* and elsewhere) were contemptuous of Schindler's soft-hearted caveat. Falwell's view of Jews or any other kind of American was not the point. What counted was his attitude toward Israel, and toward Zionism's American "friends."

They wrote of Falwell:

> Even apart from the vital issue of Israel, at this time there is a far greater communality of interests among Jews and the Moral Majority than there is among Jews and the National Council of Churches. An America with a strong family that fosters traditional values is far more likely to be a comfortable place for Jews than an America where no values are upheld.

This, of a man who forced even Roy Cohn onto the record with a denunciation of anti-Semitism! The objection to the National Council of Churches, by the way, was not to its presumed anti-family and antitraditional stands so much as to its advocacy of "dialogue" with the P.L.O. So, better to cooperate with the most bigoted force in the country than with those who would share the Holy Land with its Arab inhabitants. Writing in *Commentary*, Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab were hardly less complacent. They did not exult, as Podhoretz had already done, about Jimmy Carter's failure to get a majority of the Jewish vote in 1980. But they were as tender as could be to Falwell. He was, for instance, a great improvement on his frantically anti-Semitic predecessor, the "evangelist" Gerald Winrod:

> For the Reverend Gerald Winrod to have accepted an award from a national Jewish conclave, as Jerry Falwell recently did, is unimaginable. Indeed, so sensitive is the Moral Majority to Jewish fears that it has requested a "dialogue" with representatives of every major Jewish organization "to make the Jewish community aware that we are not an anti-Semitic group and that we probably are the strongest supporters of Israel in this country."

(Love the "probably.")

Falwell, certainly, feels free to advise Israel and the Jews. He recently told *Jewish Press* magazine that "there is no question Judea and Samaria should be part of Israel," adding that the sooner the Golan Heights and Jerusalem were fully annexed as well, the better for all concerned. What is depressing is to find Lipset and Raab writing an unequivocal "Q.E.D." under all this garbage, as if to say, "If he is uncritical of Israel, how can he be a bigot?" Picture for a second what *Commentary* would print if anybody on the left had spoken of the Jews as Falwell has done.

It's clearly on the left that *Commentary* sees the threat to Jewish interests. In a boring symposium published in the magazine's January 1980 issue, the editors asked readers to reconsider "axiomatic" Jewish attachment to what they termed "the standard liberal agenda." The pretexts for doing so were illuminating:

> This axiom might seem to have been called into question by certain recent developments—the widespread support among liberals for quotas, the diminishing enthusiasm among liberals for Israel, the growing sympathy of liberals for the PLO, and the paucity of liberal protest against the anti-Semitism that surfaced in the wake of Andrew Young's resignation.

There are many striking aspects to that "question." (For one thing, how do you call an axiom into question? For another, how do you characterize the departure of Young from his post as a "resignation"?) The first three ingredients or clauses restate the same point in different ways—loyalty to Israel is assumed to take precedence. The very last reflects back upon the very first. It is implied, as if it were pointless to debate the matter, that affirmative action is bad for all classes and sexes of Jews. This bold assertion is then juxtaposed, as if naturally enough, with waning liberal support for Israel. Tautology intervenes for a second to match sympathy for the P.L.O. with hostility to Israel. Then we learn that Young is responsible not only for his own firing but for any prejudiced remarks that might have been made about it. Earlier I quoted Howe to the effect that subliminal and intuitive factors were important in perceptions like these, and I think that the editors of *Commentary* really have no choice but to agree.

As Prof. Bernard Avishai showed in a striking and incisive article in *Dissent* (Spring 1981), *Commentary*'s neoconservative politics will not help most American Jews one bit. And most Jewish intellectuals can survive spurious appeals to their emotions. They can see, often more clearly than their Christian or secular counterparts, that Begin is a mediocre fanatic and that Falwell is a *lumpen* demagogue. Yet there has been a certain reluctance to face these conclusions, and to reject the phony logic that has led to an alliance between the most vocal proponents of Zionism and the New Right.

As Howe and Rosenberg rightly said, Israel is a state. A state, moreover, that occupies and governs the territories of others—by right of conquest. Here is the root of the matter. It is impossible to find excuses for military rule without experiencing a certain coarsening—a certain identification with the overdog. With at least a certain part of your mind, you see the world from the point of view of the policeman, the intelligence agent, the paid informer and (but it's true) even the torturer. You find that it's lonely being a cop, something that liberals don't understand. The intellectual ramifications of this are probably, in the medium and long term, incalculable. But among them are:

(*1*) The Third World changes shape. No longer a desperate and exploited area, it becomes minatory, arrogant, mob-like and greedy, impelled by a hatred of achievement and led by people who would rather shout than work. The best literary analogue here is Saul Bellow, who managed to write a whole book on Jerusalem without meeting or alluding to an Arab and, in *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, seemed to have rehearsed this shudder of distaste on the streets of New York. He has added his name to the rightist Committee for the Free World. From Teddy Kollek via Ed Koch to Midge Decter? Think about it.

(*2*) Next, it becomes harder to criticize American foreign policy. Never mind which Arab royal house is the temporary favorite in Washington; Israel will depend upon, and act as executor of, a rugged and adventurous American posture. It will also be a major customer and laboratory for military equipment. At least you can be sure that Israel won't be an Islamic republic by next Thanksgiving. Those who put Israel first, therefore, must mute their criticisms of the arms trade and the Rapid Deployment Force. They must also subcontract their consciences when

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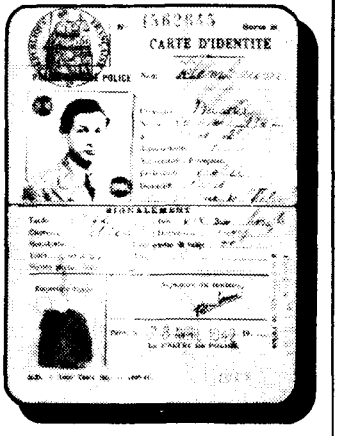

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it comes to Israel's own arms trade—with Somoza before he was overthrown, with Duarte, with Botha and even with the anti-Semitic *caudillos* of Argentina. Once you make a fetish of "security," you will the means to the end.

(*3*) A related point. If there is one issue that still unifies liberal and radical disquiet, it is the spread of nuclear weaponry. Yet, in the one area of the world that needs such technology least, it has been Israel that has set the pace. There has been a certain lack of forthrightness among liberals on this point; a willingness to make allowances. But it was agreed by many liberals that Israel acted judiciously in blasting Iraq's nuclear reactor off the map. Note here the official Israeli justification—that an Iraqi bomb would be "a mortal threat to the Jewish people." Where in the Holy Land could a thermonuclear weapon explode without wiping out countless Arab Palestinians? I don't mean to say that Iraq might not run that risk. I mean to show up the sectarian nature of the Israelis' rationale, and the dismal way in which it was echoed by pro-Begin parrots in less exposed positions.

(*4*) Having reproved the Third World for its ungrateful and demagogic conduct, those formerly liberal figures who have swallowed their doubts about Begin are also berating Europe. In many of the articles that deplore the spread of "pacifism and neutralism" in Europe—or, if you prefer, the first stirrings of reluctance at the prospect of being expendable in the next war—one finds an apparently irrelevant paragraph. This paragraph attacks European governments for their role in the Middle East and their view that the P.L.O. cannot be excluded forever from negotiations. Whatever the objection to this policy, it can hardly be on the ground of "pacifism and neutralism." A policy of "Israel first" leads quite speedily and smoothly to a policy of "America first." Jews will not be the only ones to suffer if such a program succeeds in global terms. And as for liberalism . . .

(*5*) Because the Soviet Union supports the Arab cause, and because it shamefully persecutes its Jews, it becomes harder to resist the conclusion that the "main enemy" is the U.S.S.R. This has opened a whole flank in the liberal community to doubts about détente and rearmament.

(*6*) Many Jews and many Israelis are secular, and support secular politics. Yet, as Israel falls more under the domination of the lugubrious orthodox parties, this consensus too comes under pressure. Rabbi Meir Kahane has the legal right to live in Hebron and carry a weapon. An Arab born there has neither right. This consequence of the Law of Return may be an unintended one. But many American liberals only objected when Begin proposed to alter the law's definition of a Jew. Secular consistency, an important component of liberalism, can only be harmed by double standards like these.

Can I substantiate any of these offensive assertions and innuendos? I believe I can. One particular political voyage has called in so many ideological ports as to be symbolic.

In 1967, Martin Peretz, now editor in chief of *The New Republic*, broke with his friends on the left about Israel. Since then, he has made the P.L.O. a touchstone issue, moving gradually from this single disagreement to a general repudiation of his former comrades.

I cannot believe that this has no bearing on the sad declension of *The New Republic*. The cult of "antiterrorism" has taken a sturdy hold on that once-proud magazine, and has spilled over from gung-ho attitudes on Israel to a pastiche of Reaganism in general—at least in the area of foreign policy.

In discussion with me, Peretz has pointed out that his magazine criticizes Begin quite often. He has also argued (correctly) that in many cases a shift to a more conservative position *predates* an attachment to Zionism (cf. the justly forgotten *nouvelles philosophes* in France). Peretz certainly visualizes his general political perspective as comparable to that of Daniel Patrick Moynihan—apparently tough abroad and seemingly tender at home. In fact, as has been the case with Moynihan, such a stance leads to aggressiveness abroad and, at best, negligence at home. It melts into the zombie world of Carl Gershman and the Social Democrats USA, who act as coat-holders to Jeane Kirkpatrick, who in turn acts as valet to Reagan. And, when Kirkpatrick wishes to combine her new role as government spokesman with her old job as reactionary pamphleteer, in whose pages does she receive hospitality? I'm afraid you saw this coming. Writing in *The New Republic* of November 11, Kirkpatrick could find nothing to criticize in the Reagan Administration's foreign policy except the faint possibility that it might treat with the P.L.O. I yield to anybody in my admiration of the lady, but I must thank her for supplying a perfect statement of the Begin mentality and its international complexity:

> The P.L.O. preaches a brand of Palestinian nationalism and radical politics that links the struggle for the destruction of Israel to El Salvador, Africa, the Middle East—*indeed, everywhere.*

The italics are mine. Perhaps they are otiose. *Indeed everywhere.* Only connect, says Kirkpatrick, and you will see that the vernacular of her Zionism commits you against revolution worldwide.

Peretz is not new to this line. He published pro-South African material from Arnaud de Borchgrave. He helped to start Claire Sterling's campaign on "the terror network." Constantine Menges, then a clown from the Hudson Institute and now a government full-timer on Central America, got his first serious airing in the pages of *The New Republic*. J. B. Kelly and Elie Kedourie, both of whom preach jihad against the Arab and Iranian world, have also been honored guests in the magazine's pages. There is only one thing that this salad of persons has in common, and that is an unswerving commitment *contra mundum* to Israel's imagined interests. I do not, therefore, think that it is paranoiac to identify *The New Republic*'s rightward lurch as largely a function of the Middle East conflict.

So, some small ironies in conclusion:

§ In October, *The New Republic* published an endorsement of Mayor Koch's dismal re-election campaign in New York City. The magazine decried his black critics as "anti-Semitic." Among those who found this hard to take was *The Village Voice*'s Newfield, who wrote a letter of protest and was smartly called to order by Peretz. Those who use guilt by association are seldom invulnerable themselves.

§ Kirkpatrick would perhaps not have written, and Peretz might not have published, such an overwrought piece unless she and he had at least suspected that the American right would chivvy the Jews into the sea for a few petrodollars (as the French right dumped Israel as soon as Iraq looked like a better bet). What return will Israel get for its role as a ditto to American foreign policy? More pertinently, what

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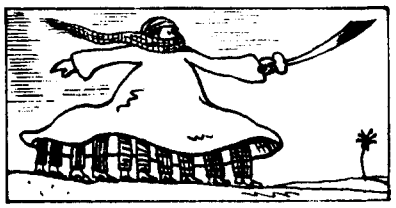
do American Jews and liberals stand to gain from being discreet on the point?

§ Kirkpatrick, Podhoretz, Kristol and the others were *at best* indifferent to the fate and (later) the revelations of Timerman, who now makes his home in Israel and cares for Zionism and the Jewish people not less than many who live elsewhere. He has stated that he sees his new country set on a course of fanaticism and disaster. I would be a hypocrite if I claimed to agree with Timerman on all points (the phrase "the Jewish Mediterranean" in his memoir seems to me especially insensitive as a description of the view from Tel Aviv), but he does remind us of an important fact. For many liberals, loyalty to Israel simply means loyalty to the Israeli government. As I. F. Stone has pointed out, dissent in Israel receives very little coverage in the United States. The substantial number of Israeli Jews who oppose their government's policies of annexation and discrimination receive almost no encouragement from their better-placed counterparts. They are ignored, or occasionally slandered, by *precisely* the same people who drone on endlessly about Israel being pluralistic and democratic.

It would be a good thing if Israeli and American liberals saw more of one another. They might learn from common experience that nobody stands to gain from an alliance between the American right and the most chauvinistic elements in Israel, and that euphemisms about "security" only serve to conceal the deadly errors that are being made in its name. The friends of the Jews are not Falwell and his Lynchburg ranters, nor the racist hooligans of Gush Emunim and the Jewish Defense League, nor the international arms dealers who shop on both sides of the street, nor the schmaltz peddlers like Koch, nor the sunshine patriots like Podhoretz.

Howe's implied question still requires an answer. If it comes to a choice between Israeli policy and liberalism, which will American liberals choose? The choice has been put off for a long time, and many sincere people obviously would prefer to postpone it indefinitely. But, meanwhile, a small but significant part of the spectrum has chosen the first option and, thereby, consciously abandoned liberalism altogether. (Numbers here are not decisive: in Israel, extremists like Geula Cohen and Kahane have very few followers but have succeeded in creating a polarization favorable to the right). If this sad division succeeds in reawakening the critical faculties of others, then the vital coalition of the left might still be salvaged. □



PALESTINIAN PARALLELS

The 'Zionist Analogy'

SADIK AL-AZM

Before the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973, the Palestine Liberation Organization was criticized by many Arabs for including so many divergent factions. P.L.O. leaders generally responded to this charge by arguing that the Zionist movement also embraced numerous factions, yet this did not interfere with the establishment of the state of Israel. Thus, what might be called the "Zionist analogy" was born, and it has exercised a surprising influence upon the P.L.O., an organization whose name is almost synonymous with anti-Zionism.

The analogy has firm roots in the history of the Jews and the Palestinians. A large number of Palestinians have been dispersed in a way that has much in common with the Diaspora. The Palestinians lack a territorial base for the economic, political and cultural activities associated with nationhood—just as the Jews lacked such a base prior to the establishment of Israel.

Moreover, the expatriate Palestinians have many of the traits traditionally associated with Diaspora Jews. For example, most Palestinians live in cities. They have a higher proportion of literate, educated and technically trained or skilled people than the general populations of their host countries. Many of them are prominent in the professions, the arts, trade, finance, banking and industry; many own small businesses.

The Palestinians and their host countries live in a state of constant tension. The response of these countries to the presence of hundreds of thousands of refugees has ranged from friction, rivalry and hatred to direct repression and persecution. In some cases, the Palestinians have been the targets of campaigns of "encirclement and annihilation." Adding to the problem is the fact that the Palestinians have resisted both cultural and political assimilation, and refused to subordinate their own aims to the revolutionary, nationalistic or socialistic goals of other peoples.

Following the 1973 war, the P.L.O. leadership adopted a "territorial solution" that was strikingly similar to the one propounded in the early 1900s by Ber Borochov, the left-wing Zionist ideologue. This meant the advocacy of an independent Palestinian state comprising the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The establishment of such a state, it was assumed, would "normalize" the situation of the Palestinians and enable them to pursue their social, economic, political and cultural development like the other Arab peoples in the Middle East.

Extremist elements within the P.L.O. argue that just as the establishment of the state of Israel provided a base for further territorial expansion, resulting in the incorporation of all of the original Palestine Mandate under Israeli rule, the creation of a Palestinian state would provide a base for continuing the Palestinian revolution and ultimately regaining Palestine for the Palestinians.

On a tactical level, the Zionist analogy suggests to the Palestinians that their objectives can be furthered by forming opportunistic alliances, which encourages them to seek help from Western Europe and the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia and the Warsaw Pact nations, the U.S. oil companies and the prince of Qatar, the U.S. State Department's Arabists and Congressional lobbies. Similarly, the P.L.O. believes that it can mobilize all Palestinians just as the Zionist movement mobilized Jews throughout the world—right wing and left wing, rich and poor, moderate and

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extremist, militant and intellectual.

Indeed, the leadership of the American and Canadian Palestinian communities has organized fund-raising and philanthropic organizations (e.g., the Palestine Fund and the Red Crescent Association) that closely resemble Jewish groups performing these functions. The charter of the Holy Land Fund in Chicago is almost a carbon copy of the Jewish Fund's charter. And the P.L.O.'s appeals to other Arabs to use their resources and financial power to pressure American and Western governments into supporting a Palestinian state replicate the tactics used by Zionists to mobilize the international Jewish community.

Interestingly enough, the proposed territorial solution to the Palestinian question split the P.L.O. in much the same way that the partition of Palestine divided Zionism when it was first proposed in the late 1920s. When the British authorities adopted the idea of a dual state, a small extremist "rejectionist front" led by Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky seceded from the Zionist Organization and formed the New Zionist Organization, a more militant and more uncompromising group. This left a large moderate majority that had non-Jewish allies and the support of international opinion. The extremists charged that mainstream Zionist leaders had capitulated to British imperialism, and argued that the Jewish homeland should never be the subject of bargaining and humiliating compromises.

After the 1973 war, the P.L.O. split into a moderate majority supported by most of the international community and a small extremist faction led by George Habash. At one point, this more militant and uncompromising faction contemplated forming a radical version of the P.L.O. The old arguments of Zionists and Jabotinskyites were heard once again.

Thus the moderate Palestinians, who advocate the territorial solution, are inverse Zionists. The main differences are that Zionism is predominantly white, European, colonialist and imperialist, while the Palestinian liberation movement is brown-skinned, anticolonialist and anti-imperialist.

In a celebrated article in *Foreign Affairs* ("Thinking the Unthinkable: A Sovereign Palestinian State," July 1978), Walid Khalidi, head of the Institute of Palestine Studies in Beirut, Lebanon, outlined a proposal for a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Like the Zionist ideologues, Khalidi aimed his remarks at the ruling elite of the dominant imperialist power in the Middle East, the United States (hence the publication of his article in *Foreign Affairs*), as well as at the ruling elites of the other Western powers. Khalidi argued, as the Zionist theoreticians did in their day, that a Palestinian state would best serve Western interests in the Middle East. Just as mainstream Zionist spokesmen portrayed a Jewish state as not inimical to the Palestinian people, so Khalidi portrayed a Palestinian state as harmless to the Israelis.

Writing in the *Journal of Palestinian Studies* ("On Political Settlement in the Middle East: The Palestinian Dimension," Autumn 1977), Sabri Jiryis, head of the P.L.O. Research Center in Beirut, praised the P.L.O. leadership's realism in adopting a limited territorial solution to the Palestininan question. Jiryis wrote that this welcome development signified that the leadership had studied and profited from the pragmatism of the Zionists.

The Zionist analogy even yields an Israeli equivalent for each Palestinian leader. Thus Yasir Arafat, who plays a paternalistic role in the Palestinian resistance movement, travels freely in the Arab and the non-Arab world, is on friendly terms with heads of state, maintains channels of communication to every party interested in the Palestinian problem and displays the consummate flexibility, diplomacy and pragmatism of Chaim Weizmann. Habash, with his inflexible political stands, his uncompromising opposition to the partition of Palestine, his constant criticism of the P.L.O. leadership for opportunism, laxness and unprincipled politicking, his inability to become the leader of the majority, his faith in a certain kind of elitist revolutionary violence, is a left-wing Jabotinsky. Naief Hawatmeh, founder of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, with his unlimited enthusiasm for the projected Palestinian state, his belief in the improved negotiating position of the Arabs after the 1973 war with Israel and his profound conviction that a Palestinian state would eventually lead to the liberation of Palestine, is a kind of Palestinian David Ben-Gurion, who presided over the founding of the Jewish state in Palestine and paved the way for its future expansion. □

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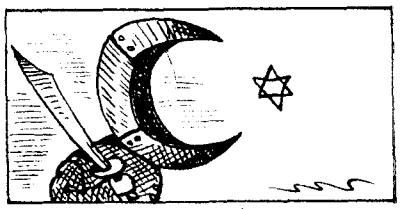

NOTES ON JIHAD

Is Islam Anti-Semitic?

EDWARD MORTIMER

Is Islam anti-Semitic? Most Jews, and many Christian or agnostic Westerners, assume that it is. That assumption was reinforced last January when the leaders of some thirty Moslem countries attending a summit conference in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, pledged themselves to a jihad (usually translated as "holy war") for the liberation of Jerusalem and other "occupied Palestinian and Arab territories." Clearly this means a war against Israel, and a war undertaken on religious grounds. No doubt many Americans take it for granted that the Moslem religion has declared war on the Jewish religion and all who profess it. The passage in the conference's declaration affirming "that Islam permits to those who believe in it and to others [i.e., non-Moslems] only right and justice, and offers to those who do not fight us in our religion, who do not drive us out from our homes and do not violate our sanctities only piety and fairness" is either ignored or regarded as empty rhetoric.

On the level of public relations in the West, the Moslem leaders could hardly have made a greater blunder than to proclaim a jihad against Israel. In doing so, they incurred the taint of anti-Semitism and reawakened the feelings of horror that the word itself inspires. It has been used by Moslems in many countries to describe their resistance to Western imperialism. For the imperialists—and therefore for us, as the inheritors of imperialist culture—a jihad connotes fanaticism, massacre, destruction. When we hear it, we know instinctively that no white woman is safe. Its use tells us that Moslems have relapsed into barbarism, if indeed they ever emerged from it. Christians and Jews must close ranks, since both will inevitably be in the line of fire. We slip easily and unconsciously into the assumption that anti-Semitism is an inherent feature of Islam, while shrugging it off as no more than an episodic aberration of European culture.

The apologists for Islam argue the exact opposite. For them, anti-Semitism is a peculiarly European phenomenon. One of Islam's special virtues, they claim, is the generous and respectful treatment it accords to minorities, and especially to Christians and Jews—fellow monotheists, "people of the Book." For thirteen centuries, Judaism flourished under Moslem rule. If, in this century, Jews have encountered Moslem hostility, that is the fault of Zionism (another peculiarly European phenomenon), which has sought to turn Jews and Moslems against one another, and to uproot Jews from their Moslem homelands and use them to colonize one particular Moslem country—Palestine—whose Moslem inhabitants the Zionists drove out.

As for the jihad, some Moslems argue today that it was always purely defensive. Others speak of this holy struggle in Marxist terms: its aim is social transformation and justice, and its methods are not necessarily violent. If they are, it is because the adversary inevitably resorts to violence before letting himself be dispossessed of the fruits of oppression. And, this second group adds, neither Christendom nor Jewry has ever suffered under a jihad as Islam did during the Crusades.

Yet the relationship between Islam and Judaism is a complex one. To a certain extent, Islam stands in the same relation to both Judaism and Christianity as Christianity does to Judaism. That is, Islam recognizes the validity of the other two religions but claims to be at a higher stage. As the history of relations between Christians and Jews shows, this makes for a certain ambivalence. Since Christ was a Jew and the Old Testament is sacred for Christians, Christians feel some kinship with the Jews. Yet, since those who are called Jews are by definition those who do not accept Christianity, Christians find themselves in opposition to Judaism. Thus, subconsciously if not consciously, Christians identify Jews with their forebears, who rejected Christ. A committed Christian is virtually bound to believe that Jews have missed the central point of their own religion. Jews are implicitly blamed by Christians for not being Christian. Jews had, so to speak, a better chance than anyone else, and they passed it up.

Mohammed was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he accepted much of both Jewish and Christian teaching. He accepted the validity of the Jewish prophets and regarded Christ as the last and greatest of them before himself. He felt a bond with both Jews and Christians because he shared their monotheism, but his disappointment was the greater when they did not accept his revelation.

There were several important Jewish clans in Medina at the time of Mohammed's arrival there in A.D. 622, and he clearly hoped that the Jews would recognize him as their prophet. The fact that they instead refuted his claims by pointing to discrepancies between the Koran (the Word of God as revealed to Mohammed) and their own scriptures was a great embarrassment to him. Consequently, the later passages of the Koran contain a good deal of polemic against the Jews, as Mohammed received revelations assuring him that he was right and they were wrong. There is also some polemic against the Christians, and both groups are accused of distorting or misinterpreting their own scriptures and failing to heed the prophets sent to them. But the Christians were not an organized power in the area near Medina, and some of the Christian holy men may have been early ecumenicists. Thus at one point the Koran says:

> Thou wilt surely find the most hostile of men to the believers are the Jews and the idolaters; and thou wilt surely find the nearest of them in love to the believers are those who say "We are Christians."

On the military level, Mohammed moved to eliminate the powerful Jewish clans as soon as they showed any sign of disloyalty. Two were forced to leave the city, and a third, which had conspired with the pagan Meccans during the siege of Medina in A.D. 627, had its adult males put to death and its women and children sold as slaves.

Modern biographers of Mohammed emphasize that these drastic measures did not violate the Arab moral code of

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Edward Mortimer was a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and is now on the editorial desk of The Times *of London. He is writing a book on the politics of Islam, to be published by Random House.*

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the time. According to W. Montgomery Watt's *Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman*, "When tribes were at war with one another or simply had no agreement, they had no obligations toward one another, not even of common decency." That may well be, but it hardly makes it less disconcerting that the man responsible for the Medina massacre is today regarded as a *model* human being by hundreds of millions of people.

That said, it is important to note that the clan was not punished for being Jewish but for a specific act of treason. Other Jews, who did not pose a political threat, remained in Medina and were assured of toleration and protection.

For example, the Jews of Khaybar, an oasis north of Medina that the Moslems conquered in A.D. 628, were allowed to continue cultivating their land as tenants of the Moslem conquerors, to whom they paid half of their produce in rent. This arrangement became the model for the organization of the Islamic empire (although both Jews and Christians were officially banned from Arabia itself after Mohammed's death in A.D. 632). Non-Moslem groups who accepted Moslem political sovereignty received "the protection of God and of his Messenger"; they retained their own governments and in return made a payment, usually in kind, to the Moslem state. They paid two separate taxes, the land tax (*kharaj*) and the poll tax (*jizya*), but were exempt from the poor rate (*zakat*), which was a Moslem religious obligation, and from military service. They kept their own courts and dealt with the Moslem rulers through their own religious leaders.

This was what became known, in the Ottoman Empire, as the *millet* system. On the whole it seems to have worked well. In traditional Arab societies, the prestige of a tribe was judged partly by its ability to protect its minorities, and this was reflected in the attitude of Moslem rulers toward their non-Moslem protégés (*dhimmis*). But as Watt wrote in *Islamic Political Thought:*

> On the whole there was more genuine toleration of non-Moslems under Islam than there was of non-Christians in medieval Christian states. There were exceptions, of course. When times were hard and difficult, non-Moslems would tend to get the worst of it. Occasionally, too, a ruler, in order to divert animosity from himself, would encourage the mob to vent its feelings on the *dhimmis*. On the whole, however, the "protected minorities" had a tolerable existence.

The most striking example of this was Moslem Spain, where the remarkable burgeoning of Jewish art and thought in the fifteenth century was brought to an abrupt end by the Christian *reconquista*, after which both Jews and Moslems were forced either to leave the country or to convert to Christianity (and the Inquisition came into existence to check on the orthodoxy of the converts).

But there are many other examples. From Iran to Morocco and from Central Asia to Yemen, the Moslem world could boast Jewish communities whose members were on average at least as prosperous as their Moslem neighbors, and whose leading citizens were often quite wealthy and influential outside their own sphere. (Many Israelis would deny this—witness the textbooks that present the Jewish experience in Moslem countries as one of squalor and backwardness punctuated by pogroms. These textbooks have provoked vigorous protests within Israel's Sephardic community.)

Islam's treatment of minorities clearly had some shortcomings from the standpoint of twentieth-century liberal humanism. First, the non-Moslem was automatically a second-class citizen. He was tolerated and protected, and he was allowed to regulate his affairs according to his own laws or customs, but he remained wholly dependent on the good will of Moslem rulers over whom he had no control, against whom he had no redress and in whose affairs he had no standing. The state was identified with the community of believers, and the non-Moslem was an outsider even though he lived under the state's power. Disputes between Jews might be settled in a Jewish court, and disputes between Christians might be settled in a Christian court, but any dispute involving a Moslem would be settled according to Islamic law, which always gave preference to the testimony of a Moslem over that of a non-Moslem.

Second, the system assumed that political and religious communities were identical. Moslems were encouraged to think of themselves first and foremost as Moslems, rather than as members of a tribal or national group, and they naturally looked at members of other faiths in the same way. Thus an Egyptian Moslem, for instance, would regard an Egyptian Jew not primarily as a fellow Egyptian but primarily as a Jew. The rise of nationalism in the Moslem world in the nineteenth century divided people along religious lines, rather than along geographical or even linguistic ones.

Arab nationalism, it is true, was taken up enthusiastically (some even say invented) by Arabic-speaking Christians who saw it as a way to escape their second-class status and become equal to their Moslem fellow citizens. But Moslem Arabs have not always seen it that way. With some justification, they tend to regard Islam as the essence of Arab history and Arab civilization, and they therefore assume that the revival of the Arab nation means a Moslem comeback after a period of Christian ascendancy. The rule of the Ottoman Turks was hardly questioned by Moslem Arabs until World War I, and the Arab nationalism since then has been fueled mainly by Moslem resentment of Christian rule and the rise of a Jewish nation in Palestine.

Third, although Jews were by and large well treated by Moslems as long as they remained a submissive minority, it is clear that anyone who wants to arouse Moslem hostility toward Jews can find passages in the Koran and statements by Mohammed that will serve this purpose (just as anyone who wants to incite Christians against Jews can make use of several passages in the Gospel of St. John). Anti-Jewish sentiments in the Koran have been invoked at various times in Moslem history, but in this century, with the appearance of Zionism as a direct challenge to Islam, they have taken on a contemporary relevance. For almost the first time since the conquest of the Khaybar oasis in the seventh century, Moslems find themselves confronted by an organized Jewish power that refuses to recognize the supremacy of Islam.

The creation of a Zionist state in Palestine also resulted in the expulsion of millions of Arabs from their land. In this Islamic exodus was born the "Palestine question."

Let me now attempt to summarize the history of the Palestine question as it has been generally perceived in the Moslem world. A predominantly Moslem territory, Palestine had been under Moslem rule since the first decade after Mohammed's death, with the exception of the brief interlude of the Crusades. It contained, in Jerusalem, the Aqsa Mosque,

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to which Mohammed is widely believed to have been miraculously transported in his famous "night journey," and, in Hebron, the tomb of Abraham, who is thought by Moslems to have built the Ka'ba in Mecca and whose "true" religion, purged of Jewish and Christian distortions, Mohammed claimed to have revived. (Also in Jerusalem is the Dome of the Rock, which is said to house the rock on which Abraham, in a gesture prototypical of Moslem submission to God, prepared to sacrifice his son.)

Between 1917 and 1948, Palestine was conquered by a Christian power (Britain), and the most fertile and populous part of it was made into a Jewish state. Most of the Moslem and Christian inhabitants fled from their homes and became refugees. The attempt by neighboring Arab states to stop the creation of Israel was ignominiously defeated. In 1967, Israel gained control over the remaining parts of Palestine west of the Jordan River, including the Old City of Jerusalem with its holy places. In 1969, the Aqsa Mosque was badly damaged in a fire set by an Australian Christian fanatic. Meanwhile, Jews settled in the Old City and in the northern, eastern and southern suburbs of Jerusalem (the western sector had been entirely Jewish since 1948) with the express intention of giving these areas an irreversibly Jewish character.

All of this was interpreted by Moslems as an act of aggression against the house of Islam in one of its most sacred tenets. That is what Zionism means to Moslems, and they are against it. This does not necessarily mean that they are anti-Semitic. One can be opposed to the implantation of a Jewish state in Palestine without being systematically hostile to Jews, although it requires a degree of sophistication. Until the proclamation of the state of Israel in 1948, the Zionist settlers in Palestine were known simply as "the Jews," and their main spokesmen claimed that they were acting as the vanguard of a Jewish nation. It was all too easy, therefore, for Moslems to blame Jews in general for what they saw as the expropriation of Arab land. And to a certain extent the Islamic tradition encouraged Moslems to react in that way. Moslems are accustomed to the idea that a person's political status is determined by his religion, and they are taught by the example of Mohammed to suspect the political loyalty of Jews once an alternative claim to their allegiance has been put forward.

All but the most sophisticated Moslems, therefore, assumed that the aggressors in Palestine were "the Jews," and many added that this was the sort of thing one must expect from Jews. Perhaps the most passionate devotee of this argument was the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. For many years, Faisal supplied his guests with copies of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* and he tried to keep all Jews out of his kingdom (although he was obliged to make an exception for then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger). Faisal also strove untiringly to convince his visitors that Zionism and Communism (both founded by Jews, after all) were but different facets of the same evil.

One could say, therefore, that anti-Semitism is the Islam of fools, just as it was the socialism of fools in nineteenth-century Europe. Anti-Semitism is a convenient weapon for leaders who wish to inflame the Moslem masses, or to direct their anger toward a relatively easy target. In the last half-century the Moslem world, or at least the Arab world, has not been the safest or the most pleasant region for Jews to live in, and the great majority of them have in fact left. Zionism certainly helped to bring that about, both directly and indirectly, but Islam also played a part.

That the Islamic revolution in Iran, which was loudly anti-Zionist, should have provoked an exodus of Iranian Jews is thus not surprising. Some prominent Jews who stayed in Iran have been executed as alleged Zionist agents. Others, like all too many Moslem Iranians, have been arbitrarily arrested or have had their property seized. But it is only fair to add that persecution of Jews has not been encouraged by Iran's religious leaders. Like Christians and Zoroastrians, Jews are officially recognized in the Iranian Constitution as a religious minority; they control their own schools, and they have their own laws and their own representative in Parliament—a modified version of the *millet* system. Their lot is certainly happier than that of the luckless Bahais, members of a sect that began in the nineteenth century as a deviation from Islam and that regards Mohammed as a prophet, thereby denying the finality of his revelation. To orthodox Moslems, the Bahais are guilty of apostasy, a crime traditionally punishable by death. Under the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini, they alone can justly claim to be the victims of *religious* persecution.

What of the jihad? It means "struggle" or "striving." The word derives its sanctity from the frequent references in the Koran to "striving in the way of God," which seems to be a reference to the raids, or *razzias*, carried out by the Moslems against the trading caravans of pagan Meccans. This age-old form of tribal warfare was given a new slant by the Koran, which made it legitimate to use only against non-Moslems. The energies of the Arab tribesmen were thus directed outward and became the driving force of Islam's formidable early expansion.

Clearly the jihad was defensive only in the sense that the best form of defense is attack, and often pre-emptive attack at that. Just as clearly, it could not go on forever. Either the whole world would become Moslem or the expansion of Islam would find its limits and begin to coexist with other religions. The latter occurred, and in this century the jihad has usually been invoked not for the conquest of lands that had never known Islam but for the re-

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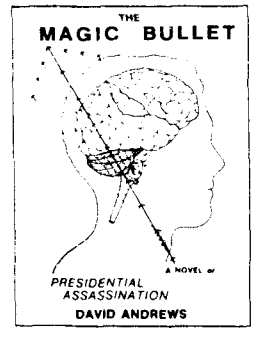

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conquest or redemption of lands or peoples that had fallen away. Often the idea of internal redemption—the restoration of true religion and social justice in a corrupt and irreligious Moslem society—was paramount. At other times it was the battle against non-Moslem encroachment on Moslem terrain: first the Sikhs and then the British in India; the French in Algeria; most recently the Russians in Afghanistan. In general, success has been proportionate to the commitment of the faithful to a particular struggle and to the credibility of the leaders issuing the call. The biggest flop was the proclamation of a jihad against France, Russia and Britain by the Ottoman government in 1914.

On that basis, the prospects for the jihad proclaimed in Mecca last January do not seem good. Few of the leaders assembled there have the necessary charisma in the eyes of their subjects, and many of them are more absorbed by conflicts with one another than by the question of Palestine. The two regimes that have tried most consistently to base their politics on Islamic militancy—those of Libya and Iran—were conspicuously absent. The hosts of the conference, and the keenest peddlers of the jihad idea, were the rulers of Saudi Arabia, who seem to have adopted it mainly as a smokescreen for their continued close relations with the United States. The Saudis sought to soften the impact of the announcement in Washington by explaining that the jihad would be political and economic, and only in the last resort military.

Most Moslems live a long way from Palestine and are unlikely to take up Yasir Arafat's invitation at Mecca to join his fight ("The ranks of our strugglers are open and welcome all the brothers who seek the afterlife through the present"). According to Arafat, "tens of brother strugglers from the Arab and Islamic countries" were "martyred" last year "for the sake of and in defense of the Palestinian revolution." It seems a fair bet that the number will not be significantly higher this year.

Yet to write off the Islamic summit at Mecca as having no significance and to assume that the Moslem masses are indifferent to the fate of Palestine would be a mistake. Hypocrisy is the tribute vice pays to virtue, and the hypocrites of Mecca would not make such declarations if they did not think they were what the folks back home wanted to hear. Their peoples may not want to die for Palestine, but the failure to liberate Palestine is seen by most Moslems as a reproach to the leadership of the Moslem world. So Moslem leaders must at least appear to be doing something about it, and that will have to be taken into account by Western policy makers until a solution can be found that Moslems will accept as fair to the Palestinians and respectful of Islam's holy places. The jihad in Afghanistan remains a local affair. The jihad for Jerusalem is the big one. □

DOCUMENTS.

TWO SIDES OF AN ISSUE

International Law and The Israeli Occupation

MICHAEL REISMAN

THE WEST BANK AND THE RULE OF LAW. *A Study by Raja Shehadeh and Jonathan Kuttab. International Commission of Jurists, 1980.*

THE RULE OF LAW IN THE AREAS ADMINISTERED BY ISRAEL. *Israeli National Section of the International Commission of Jurists, 1981.*

Since 1967, Israel has governed the West Bank as well as the Gaza Strip as a "belligerent occupant," a legal concept recognized by international law and codified in the Geneva and The Hague Conventions. The law of belligerent occupation views the seizure of territory as a tactical but temporary necessity of war; until a peace treaty is signed and the territory is returned, the law tries to balance the military needs of the occupying power with the human needs of the inhabitants of the occupied territory. While recognizing the occupier's complete control over the land and the people it has conquered, the law limits the exercise of *legal* power there to actions that are consistent with military necessity and that maintain the status quo. These actions should facilitate the peaceful resolution of the conflict and the return of the territory to the government from which it was seized. In the case of the West Bank, there are many complications.

After the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Arab states explicitly recognized the Palestinians as the rightful owners of the West Bank. Jordan, which had annexed this area in the 1948 war, and many members of the United Nations have accepted that decision and have insisted that the territory be turned over to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people. But because the P.L.O. is publicly committed to the destruction of Israel, Israel, not surprisingly, refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the P.L.O.'s claim to the land. That roadblock has political advantages for Israel, which has its own claims to the West Bank. Intensely religious groups of Jewish settlers have established a presence there, and substantial domestic support for retaining the area has developed in Israel. Nonetheless, in the Camp David accords of September 1978, the United States, Israel and Egypt agreed on a transitional regime for the West Bank and Gaza, lasting no more than five years and aimed at providing "full autonomy to the inhabitants." The accords also stipulated a withdrawal of the Israeli military government and civilian administrators as soon as a self-governing authority was freely elected and outlined a procedure for reaching a final resolution of the West Bank issue after five years. This was unusual not only because Israel and Egypt had taken it upon themselves to make the final disposition of the West Bank but also because they were contemplating options—for example, Israel's retention of the area—that

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are not countenanced by the law of belligerent occupation.

Egypt believed that Camp David and the peace treaty were the necessary first steps to securing Israeli withdrawal and the creation of a Palestinian state. But most other Arab countries denounced the agreements, ostracized Egypt and vilified Anwar el-Sadat for concluding a separate peace with Israel and betraying the Palestinian cause. Many openly exulted at Sadat's assassination. Jordan, though courted ardently by the United States and Egypt, refused to participate in the Camp David negotiations or their aftermath. Israel continued its settlement policy on the West Bank and insisted on a very limited form of autonomy, all of which confirmed the worst fears of many Arabs, made intransigence seem the proper course and drove an even deeper wedge between Sadat and other Arabs.

Another complicating factor in Israel's occupation of the West Bank is that new developments in international law have changed some basic rules of the game. In the past, the belligerent occupant was required to maintain the status quo in the occupied territory so as to facilitate its return to the state from which it was taken. But the scope of international law has expanded in recent years to include such areas as human rights and economic development. Thus an occupying power may have to do more than maintain the status quo; it may be called on by the international community to initiate reforms. Some of these reforms—extensions of the franchise, increased access to courts, economic development and reallocation of natural resources—will inevitably affect the eventual reversion of the territory that international law requires. Nor can an occupier deny the inhabitants' right of self-determination, for it is a fundamental postulate in international law.

The International Commission of Jurists is a private organization that has distinguished itself in human-rights matters. All human-rights organizations must become embroiled in politics to some extent, and the I.C.J. has not avoided controversy. In 1980, it published a study by Raja Shehadeh and Jonathan Kuttab, Palestinian lawyers in Ramala, on the West Bank. The study, "The West Bank and the Rule of Law," presented the authors' conclusions about how well Israeli military authorities have observed the international laws governing belligerent occupation. Shortly after the study appeared, the Israeli section of the I.C.J. protested that the Israeli government had not been given the opportunity to comment on the report and published a rebuttal titled "The Rule of Law in the Areas Administered by Israel." It was prepared by lawyers in the military reserve performing their required active duty by serving with the occupation forces on the West Bank; the lawyers were assisted by the head of the international-law branch of the Israeli Advocate-General's unit.

White papers prepared by the opposing states in international disputes make one think of civil cases in which the judge, after hearing each party's presentation of the facts, wonders whether the plaintiff and the defendant were involved in the same accident. The occupying authority, ruling by military force and possessed of almost unlimited powers, is invariably astonished and enchanted by its own near-saintly self-restraint in the face of unremitting provocation. On the other side, the occupied population sees the occupation as unmitigated tyranny and regards any action the authorities take, however grave the provocation for it, as automatically cruel and unjustified. Generous acts are studied for conspiratorial motives. From the perspective of the occupied, the only good thing an occupier can do is to leave.

As legal documents, both studies are seriously flawed. The I.C.J. report ignores the doctrine of belligerent occupation, which permits the occupier to disregard local law when military necessity requires it. Indeed, there is almost no mention of military necessity in the report, which is essentially a catalogue of alleged violations. But Israel is still at war, and so it may invoke military necessity in justification of its actions. The Israeli rebuttal, on the other hand, does not take into account the international laws on human rights, certain precepts of which are considered inviolable. (If the I.C.J. report virtually ignores military necessity, the Israeli reply often speaks of it in the same talismanic way that Richard Nixon used the words "national security.") And the rebuttal is sublimely oblivious to the Arab nations' fears that Israel intends to annex the occupied territories.

Not surprisingly, the I.C.J. report portrays darkly many things the Israeli military authorities have done, while in the Israeli rebuttal these same actions are refulgent. The I.C.J. study does praise the Israeli government for abolishing the death penalty on the West Bank, but it criticizes reforms that are cited with pride in the Israeli report. Since 1968, for example, Israel has permitted West Bank residents to bring suit against the military authorities in Israeli courts. But the I.C.J. views this concession with alarm, charging that it undermines the West Bank's indigenous court system. The Arabs' lack of confidence in the impartiality of Israeli judges in matters affecting Palestinians is understandable.

Disagreements on the "facts" abound. The outsider lacking firsthand knowledge of life on the West Bank (as I do) cannot evaluate the truth or the falsity of the conflicting claims. Even the documentation is suspect, and some documents are apparently not available. The secretary general of the I.C.J. wrote in the preface to its report that copies of the legislation and the rules passed by the Israeli occupying authorities were unobtainable. "Nowhere is a complete set available," he wrote, "and efforts even by lawyers to obtain copies of missing orders are usually unsuccessful." In their rebuttal, the Israelis claim that volumes of "the collection of proclamations and orders are distributed free of charge to all those included in the general distribution lists. . . . Anyone else requesting copies from the military government receives them immediately." Whom does one believe?

And what of the extralegal acts of the military that go unrecorded? The I.C.J. paper alleges, for example, that Israeli soldiers frequently seize identity papers, which West Bank residents need to travel within the region, and hold them for periods up to several weeks as a form of punishment. The Israeli reply does not mention this allegation.

There is much else on which the parties disagree. The I.C.J. report is alarmed by Israel's expropriation of Arab lands and water rights in the occupied territories, which takes on a crucial importance in an agrarian society. The Israelis, for their part, claim they strictly adhere to the law, and deny many of the charges regarding water policy. They do, however, concede that Arab land is often taken for settlements. The I.C.J. report is highly critical of Israel's education policy in

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the territories, charging censorship, invasion of school premises, closing of schools, restrictions on private universities, deportation and harassment of teachers and discouragement of research. The I.C.J. does not consider, however, if these actions were justifiable under the doctrine of military necessity. The Israeli reply claims that there have been substantial improvements in education and seems to imply that Israel is responsible for the new private institutions of higher learning.

In addition to the factual disputes, there are a number of sharp exchanges on legal matters. In some of these, the claim of military necessity does not help the Israeli case. For example, the I.C.J. report criticizes the Israeli authorities for destroying houses belonging to people who associated with, or were suspected of associating with, Palestinian guerrillas. The Israeli rebuttal concedes that Article 53 of the Geneva Convention prohibits "any destruction by the occupying power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons. . . ." (This prohibition does not apply in cases where the destruction is, as one authority puts it, "rendered absolutely necessary to military operations.") The Israeli reply cites a lawyer with its Ministry of Justice who has expanded the concept of military necessity to include the need "to create effective military reaction." But, of course, military reprisals against civilians are simply illegal.

Nor is Israel's practice of using deportation as a punishment defensible under international law. Article 49 of the Geneva Convention prohibits "individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations." Yet Israel has deported Palestinians for what it has called "security reasons." The Israeli Supreme Court has interpreted Article 49 broadly, and a former Israeli attorney general, who is now a justice of the Supreme Court, has justified the deportations by citing public statements made by some of the deportees about their subversive activities on the West Bank. But the Geneva Convention and relevant provisions of the U.N.'s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights quite clearly prohibit this practice.

Human rights apply to individuals; one must not lose sight of the trees for the forest. It is important to protest specific violations of belligerent occupation law, even when it can be argued that, overall, the occupation is a relatively benign and lawful one. Hence the valuable contribution of organizations like the I.C.J. But it is equally important not to lose sight of the forest. Ultimately, any appraisal of the lawfulness of activities on the West Bank depends on whether Israel is engaged in a belligerent occupation or an incremental annexation. If the former is true, then according to one's political taste, one can praise particular instances of Israeli generosity and lawful behavior or protest particular instances of Israeli violations of international law, assured that, at the appropriate time, the land will be either returned to Jordan or turned over to its Palestinian inhabitants. But if annexation is the goal, then each instance of departure from the law of belligerent occupation takes on a graver significance.

The Israeli government has not formally declared its intention to annex the West Bank. Since 1967, it has proclaimed a policy of abiding by The Hague regulations and the Fourth Geneva Convention (though on occasion the Israeli Supreme Court has evaded application of the latter on technical grounds). But Israel's Prime Minister and its current Minister of Defense, Ariel Sharon, have made no secret of the fact that they consider the West Bank an integral part of Israel. Other members of Menachem Begin's government have strongly supported retaining the West Bank on religious, imperial or strategic grounds. In 1968, Prof. Yehuda Blum, now Israel's representative to the United Nations, published an article, widely circulated by the Israeli government, arguing that since Jordan was not really entitled to the West Bank, Israel's claim to the territory was as good as, if not better than, others'. "Since," wrote Blum, "no State can make out a legal claim that is equal to that of Israel, this relative superiority of Israel may be sufficient, under international law, to make Israel[i] possession of Judea and Samaria virtually indistinguishable from an absolute title. . . ." The claims of the Palestinian inhabitants and their right to self-determination were not mentioned.

Legal arguments aside, both the Labor and the Likud parties support a settlement policy that seems to rule out eventual withdrawal. In a recent public-opinion poll, 52.8 percent of the Israelis surveyed expressed no reservations about Israeli settlements on the West Bank. In this context, Begin's repeated references to "Judea and Samaria" and his characterization of Israeli Jews as "Palestinians" should not be dismissed as mere pedantry. They may represent an important step in the direction of appropriation: first symbols and names are taken over and then everything else. On the other hand, these are, after all, only words, an abundant resource in Middle East politics. Former U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell's cynical advice has relevance here: "Watch what we do and not what we say." Since 1967, eighty-nine Israeli settlements have been established on the West Bank, some in populated Arab areas, and they are now organized into ten regional councils. The Jewish National Fund, an Israeli group, has been quietly purchasing land on the West Bank. It is unclear exactly how many Israelis have settled in the area. Some American accounts have placed the number at more than 100,000, but it is probably less than 20,000. *Newsweek* reported in August that Israeli settlers owned one-third of the land and 90 percent of the water rights on the West Bank, but the source of these figures is obscure.

In October, Sharon, a champion of grandiose schemes of Israeli settlement on the West Bank, began to transfer power there from the military to a civilian governor. He also sought to neutralize resistance to an increased Israeli presence by bypassing pro-P.L.O. mayors and city councils and creating indigenous governmental organizations. These are, to say the least, innovations in belligerent occupation law. Their purpose, however, is not hard to divine. The Camp David accords do not provide for a plebiscite for self-determination after five years of autonomy. Instead, the agreement reached by Israel, Egypt and Jordan will be voted on "by the elected representatives of the West Bank and Gaza." Sharon, it would appear, is making sure who those representatives will be.

If these examples augur an Israeli policy to retain the West Bank permanently, with a "military-civilian administration" having power over the Arab inhabitants, as long as there are any, Israel would no longer be a temporary belligerent occupant but a colonizing power. The West Bank would

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be transformed into a Middle Eastern Bantustan.

Certainly, recent steps the Israelis have taken are legally controversial. Paragraph 6 of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that "the Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." The Israeli rebuttal to the I.C.J. report interprets this as prohibiting only migration into the occupied territory that results in the displacement of the local population or that is encouraged by the state. It does not apply to voluntary movements of individuals, "as is the case with the Israeli settlers who live in these new settlements." This artful interpretation is inconsistent with the basic principles of belligerent occupation, and it conveniently overlooks the role the Israeli government has played in the creation of the settlements. It also ignores the settlements' potential effect on moderate Arabs, who watch the Camp David process to see if its promise of autonomy and self-determination for the Palestinians is real or a sham.

Obviously no one wants his country to be occupied. But the prospect of a slow de-facto annexation of the West Bank is even worse—for its Arab inhabitants, for Israel and for all the rest of us whose security is increasingly intertwined with the politics of the Middle East. One must not forget that the P.L.O.'s stated goals are unacceptable and must be changed. Until the P.L.O. indicates its willingness to accept Israel's existence, and until a general peace is forged, Israel is legally entitled to continue its belligerent occupation. But it is not entitled to undertake an incremental annexation.

An Israeli government—Likud or Labor—is thus caught in a cruel dilemma. In the absence of a comprehensive peace, Israel has no choice but to remain on the West Bank, where international law requires it to introduce some reforms. But given the ambiguity of its ultimate objective, every such reform must remain suspect. The longer Israel occupies the West Bank, the more Israeli political elements, who justify its retention on mystical and security grounds, will settle there. This in turn will convince the Arabs that Israel is bent on expansion, making peace more difficult to achieve and making Israeli withdrawal an even more improbable task. Annexation will almost certainly doom efforts to negotiate a peace and eventually lead Israel to either create its own Northern Ireland or undertake a massive expulsion that would stir intense international protest and create new instabilities in the region. Nor will it end there. If Israel is entitled to the West Bank under revisionist Zionist theories, it may also be entitled to "Eastern Eretz Israel." There will be no end to expansion.

It is obvious that there cannot be a resolution of the Middle East conflict without Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the creation of some sort of territorial community for the Palestinian people. Israel may certainly provide for its own security, and it may validly insist on appropriate guarantees and defensive arrangements. But not more. Unfortunately, indecision in Washington and confusion among groups in America sympathetic to Israel about the real security issue have made it easy for extremists to shape a policy that many Israelis know is profoundly wrong. The key to change is the United States.

Withdrawal from the occupied territories was the policy expressed in U.N. Resolution 242, at one time a keystone of American and Israeli policy, but now interpreted in innovative and obscure ways by the Begin government. The peace treaty with Egypt indicated that if there is a promise of a settlement of the issue of a Palestine homeland, peace can be purchased by returning the territory seized in 1967; without withdrawal and palpable progress on the Palestinian problem, no resolution is conceivable with Syria, with Jordan, with the Palestinians and with the rest of the Arab world. This view, widely held in Europe and slowly winning converts in the United States, still has little support in Israel. One hopes that ultimate disengagement and withdrawal become clear Israeli policy and that, in the interim, Israel remains nothing more than a scrupulously legal belligerent occupant. □

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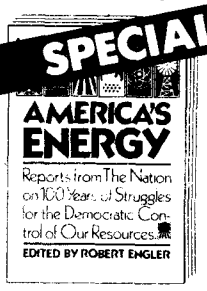
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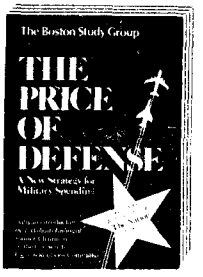

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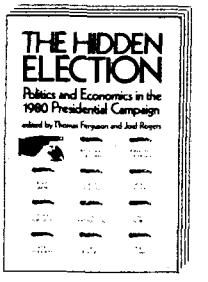

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R	E	W	R	I	T	E	■	I	M	P	E	R	I	L
C	■	H	■	T	■	A	■	S	■	E	■	E	■	T
H	A	I	R	S	■	D	I	E	■	L	O	O	G	E
A	■	O	■	■	■	A	■	■	■	■	■	O	■	R
N	E	E	D	Y	■	B	I	G	A	M	I	S	T	■
T	■	■	■	E	■	L	■	O	■	E	■	■	■	R
■	M	O	N	S	T	E	R	S	■	N	O	B	L	E
M	■	V	■	■	■	■	■	L	■	■	■	A	■	A
A	R	E	A	S	■	C	H	I	■	N	O	V	E	L
R	■	R	■	P	■	O	■	N	■	E	■	A	■	I
I	N	S	U	L	A	R	■	G	O	V	E	R	N	S
N	■	E	■	I	■	G	■	S	■	E	■	I	■	T
E	L	E	C	T	R	I	C	■	O	R	G	A	N	S

X-523

Crossword Puzzle No. 1893

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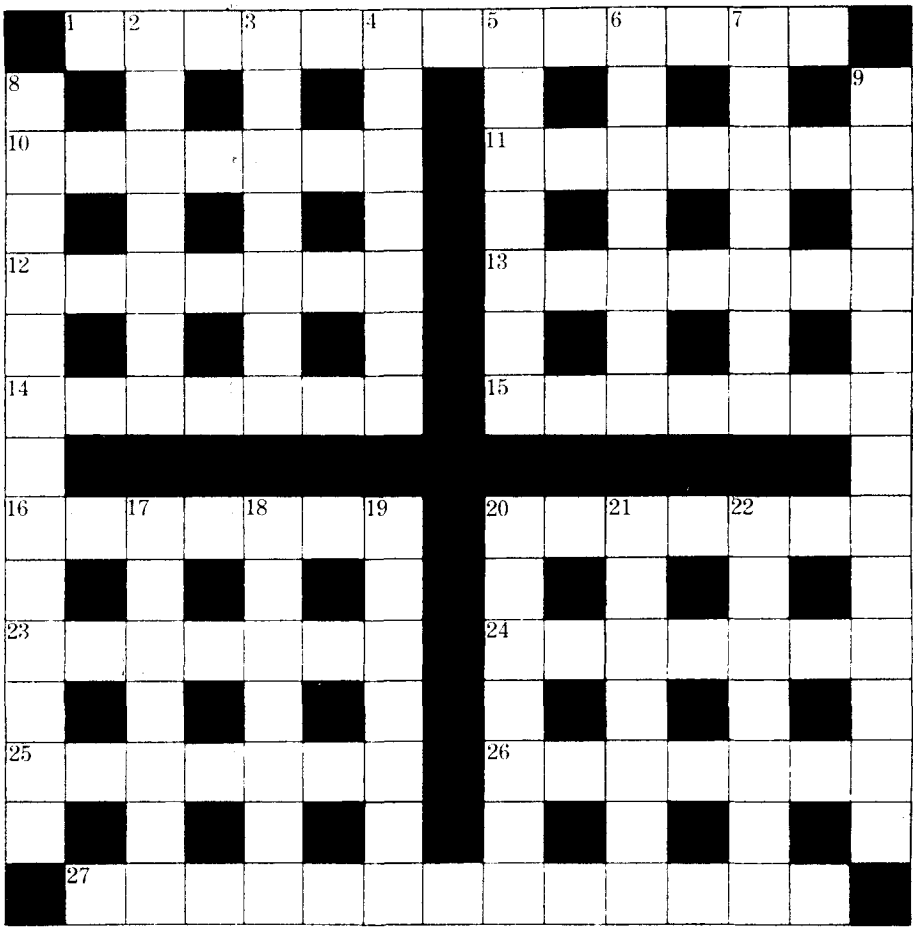

ACROSS

1 Very confused about the solution not beginning with a regular end—it might be War! (13)
10 Implying an alternative could be "detains." (7)
11 Not what the British mean by legal chambers—more likely to be found in Western setting. (7)
12 They used to wash where the gang gets together. (4-3)
13 One probably doesn't need it with a ballpoint, but you might find one at the police station. (7)
14 Rings of metal, possibly, but they're the type that should come clean! (7)
15 What does one wind up with, if one does? Just deserts! (7)
16 A synomyn for this returns to place, to throw the head back. (7)
20 "Nonproprietary" generally starts with the AMA no longer in America. (7)
23 Pogo stick? No, but what the brewer needs may be on it. (3,4)
24 Or in France just a little bit to beat on the track? (7)
25 Batting with this, a player might want to keep it high. (7)
26 If you wanted a drink, would you find one in store, or the other way around? (7)
27 Odd chaps only stay with one who might use free association. (13)

DOWN

2 These sectarians go every which way except West! (7)
3 It's very laborious, as the poet might say, to unfold a flower. (7)
4 Modernizes? It's past due—badly so! (7)
5 Change for a dime? That's about what it takes to keep junior tidy when drunk. (7)
6 Straits familiar to New Yorkers, when hurried up by quarrels, of a sort. (7)
7 But a hen can be one at night! (7)
8 The last was asked "what of the first," but nowadays one might consider him a shifty worker. (13)
9 In potential peril? What a way to go! (9,4)
17 Late/light dinners/diners? (7)
18 Those paid by the CIA in disguise? It's very ordinary. (7)
19 Furthermore, it may be archaic, yet in fact, here today. (7)
20 Benny was obviously a fine person! (7)
21 Flat out if so? Nothing artificial, either. (7)
22 Prepares such, if a desire is proven wrong. (7)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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